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THE TRANSFORMATION OF JOB

A TALE OF THE HIGH SIERRAS

By FREDERICK VINING FISHER.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

If one will take the trouble to tramp with staff in hand the high Sierras, he will find not only the Yosemite, but Gold City and Pine Tree Ranch, though perhaps they bear another name. Most of the quaint characters of this tale still dwell among the vine-clad hills. To introduce to you these friends that have interested the author, and to tell anew the story of the human soul, this work is written.

Out of love of never-to-be-forgotten memories of Pine Tree Ranch, the author dedicates this book to him who once welcomed him to its white porch, but who now sleeps beneath the shadow of the mountains — Andrew Malden.

FREDERICK VINING FISHER.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF JOB,

A TALE OF THE HIGH SIERRAS.

By FREDERICK VINING FISHER.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW ARRIVAL AT GOLD CITY.

THE stage was late at Gold City. It always was. Everybody knew it, but everybody pretended to expect it on time.

Just exactly as the old court-house bell up the hill struck six, the postmistress hurriedly opened her door and stood anxiously peering up the street, the loafers who had been dozing on the saloon benches shuffled out and leaned up against the posts, the old piano in the Miners' Home began to rattle and a squeaky violin to gasp for breath, while the pompous landlord of the "Palace Hotel," sending a Chinaman to drive away a dozen pigs that had been in front of his door through the day, took his post on the sidewalk to await his coming guests — who generally never came.

There was a time when Gold City had been a great town —

> "In days of old,
> In days of gold,
> In days of forty-nine."

The boys often hung around the saloon steps and listened with gaping mouths while Yankee Sam and the other old men told of the golden age, when the streets of Gold City were crowded and Tom Perry made a fortune in one day and lost it all gambling that night; when there was more life in Gold City than 'Frisco could shake a stick at; when the four quarters of the globe came in on the stage and mined all day, danced all night and went away rich.

But Gold City, now, was neither large nor rich. The same eternal hills surrounded her and the same great pine trees shaded her in summer's heat and hung in white like sentinals of the past in the winter's moonlight. But the sound of other days had died away. The creek bed had long since yielded up its treasure and lay neglected, exposed to the heat and frost. The old brick buildings rambling up the street were still left, but were fast tottering to decay. Side by side with the occupied buildings, stood half-fallen adobes and shattered blocks filled only with the ghosts of other years.

Up on the hill rose the court house, the perfect image of some quaint Dutch church along the Mohawk in York State. Gray and old, changeless it stood, looking down in silent disdain on these California buildings hastening to an early grave. Here and there, hid by pines and vines, up the dusty side-hill roads, one caught glimpses of pretty cottage homes, where dwelt the few who, when the tide had turned, were left stranded in this far-off California mining town.

Yes, Gold City was of the past. Her glory had long since departed. Yet somehow everyone expected its return. The old men read the 'Frisco papers, when they could get them, and grew excited when they heard that silver had fallen and gold had a new chance for life. The night that news came, Yankee Sam ordered a treat for the whole crowd and politely told the saloonkeeper that he would settle shortly, when

the boom came. Possibly some great capitalist might come in any day and buy up the mines and things would boom. He might be on the stage any night. That is the reason the whole town came out regularly to meet the stage, marveled if it was late, and gambled on the probability that a telegram from 'Frisco had held it for a special train of "bigbugs." That is why the hotel-keeper drove the pigs away and prepared for business.

They had done that thing now in Gold City so long it was beginning to be second nature; and yet deeper was getting the sleep, and the only thing that could rouse the town was the coming of the stage with its possibilities.

The stage was later than usual this night. So late the old-timers were sure Joe must have a passenger. As it was fifty miles over the plains and foot-hills that Joe had to come, there was, of course, plenty of chance of his being late. In fact, he never was on time. They all knew that. But to think that Joe would be two whole hours back was a little unusual for a town where nothing unusual ever happened. The big colored porter at the Miners' Home was tired of holding his bell ready to ring, the loungers on the benches in front of the corner grocery had exhausted their yarns, when the dust up the street on the hill caused the barefooted boys to stop their games and stand expectant in the road to watch Joe arrive.

With a shout and a flourish, the four horses came tearing around the court-house corner, plunged relentlessly down the hill and dragged the rickety old coach up to the hotel, with a jerk that nearly upset the poor thing and brought admiration to everybody's eyes. Fortunately for the coach, that was the only time of day the horses ever went off a snail's pace. The dinner bell at the Miners' Home clanged vigorously, the piano in the saloon opposite set up a clatter, the crowd hurried around the dust-enveloped coach to see if they could discover a passenger, while the red-faced landlord shouted, "This way to the Palace Hotel, gentlemen!"

To-night, when the dust cleared away, for the first time in weeks the crowds discovered a passenger. In fact, he was out on the brick sidewalk before they saw him. Pale-faced, blue-eyed, with delicate, clear-cut features, clad in a neat gray coat and short trousers, which merged into black stockings and shoes, with a black tie and soiled white collar, all topped off with a derby hat and plenty of dust, a wondering, trembling lad of twelve stood before them. Such a sight had not been seen in Gold City in its history. A city lad dropped down among these rough miners and worn-out wrecks of humanity!

"Well, pard, who be yer?" at last asked a voice; and a dozen echoed his query.

With a frightened look around for some refuge, such as the deer gives when surprised, the new-comer answered, "I am Mr. Arthur Teale's boy, and I want to see him;" and, turning to the landlord, asked if he would please tell Mr. Teale his boy had come.

Not a man moved, but each glanced significantly at the other. Yankee Sam, a sort of father to the town, who, at times, felt his responsibility, when not too overcome by the hot stuff at the Miners' Home, now stepped up and interviewed the lad.

Mr. Teale's son, was he? And who was Mr. Teale, and where did he come from, and why was he traveling alone?

Standing there in the evening twilight, on the rough brick walk in front of the Palace Hotel, to that group of rough-handed men in unkempt locks and woolen shirts and overalls, to those shirt-sleeved, well-oiled, red-faced bar-keepers, with the landlord in the center, the passenger told his story.

He told of a home in the far East; of how, one day long ago, his father started away out West to make his fortune; how he patted him on the head and said some day he should send for him and mamma — but he

never did. The little fellow faltered, as he told how his mother grew sick and his grandfather died; and how, after a time, he and his mother had started to find father, and over the wide prairies and high mountains and dusty deserts, had traveled the long journey in search of husband and father.

The young eyes filled with tears — yes, and some older, rough ones did, too, that had been dry for years — as he told how mother had grown weaker and weaker; and, when they had reached the California city and the summer's heat had climbed up the mountain side, she had died; and, dying, had told him to go on and find Gold City and his father. So he had come, and "Would some one please tell Mr. Teale his boy was here?"

That night there was great excitement in Gold City. Groups of men were talking in undertones everywhere. With a promise to try and find his father, Yankee Sam left the boy sitting on the door-step of the Palace; where, hungry and tired, he fell asleep, while all the street arabs stood at a respectful distance commenting on "the city kid what says he's Teale's boy." No one thought to take the little wanderer in. No one thought he was hungry. They were too excited for that. Teale's kid was here. What should they do with him and how could they tell him?

Yankee Sam interviewed the lad.
—See page 6.

Did they know Teale? Yes, they did. Slim, pale-faced, the picture of this boy, only taller, fuller grown, he had come to Gold City. With ragged clothes that spoke of better days, he had tramped into town one winter night through the snow and begged a bed at the Miners' Home. He had struck it rich for a time down by Mormon Bar, and treated all the boys in joy over his good luck, then lost it all over the card table in the end. Thrice he had repeated that experience. In his better moments he had talked of a wife and blue-eyed boy in the East, then again he seemed to forget them. The gaming table, the drink, the crowd he went with, ruined him. One night the boys heard cries in the hollow back of "Monte Carlo," the worst saloon and gam-

bling den in the place; when morning came they found Teale and a boon companion both dead there. Who was to blame? Nobody knew. Under the old pine trees on the hill, just outside the graveyard gate, where the respectable dead lay, they buried them. And now Teale's boy was come, and who should tell him, and where should he go?

CHAPTER II.

ANDREW MALDEN.

ANDREW MALDEN was in town that night, yet no one thought of asking him, the hardest-hearted man in Grizzly county. Rich, with acres to spare, a mill that turned out lumber by the wholesale, horses that could outstrip any Bucephalus in the county. Either from jealousy or some cause, the world about Gold City, Frost Creek, Chichilla, all hated Andy Malden.

No one noticed how he listened to the story, how he glanced more than once at the tired traveler, till they heard him order his horses at moon-up, order the landlord to wake the boy and feed him.

When, promptly at ten, he took the strange lad in his arms and put him in his buckboard, seized the reins and drove toward Spring Creek, the Pines and home, the whole town was more dumfounded than in years, and the landlord said he guessed old Andy was crazy. Only Yankee Sam seemed to understand, and the old man muttered to himself, as he turned once more to the saloon, "Well, now! Andy thinks it is his youngster come back again that I helped lay beneath the pines, coming thirty years now."

Sam was right. It was the dormant love of thirty long-gone years, all roused again, that stirred the old man that night. The lonely, homeless boy on the "Palace" doorstep had touched a heart that most men thought too hard to be broken in this world or the next.

Andrew Malden was not a bad man, if he was hard. The outward vices which had ruined most men who had come to Gold City to gain the world and lose their souls, never touched him. That craving for excitement, the natural heritage of hot-headed youth, which often in that old mining camp lasted long after the passionate days of young life and lit the glazed eyes of age with a wild, unnatural fire, never seemed a part of his nature. Other men fed the fires of passion with the hot stuff of the "Monte Carlo," and the midnight gaming table, till, tottering wrecks consumed of self, they lingered on the doorsteps of Gold City, the ghosts of men that were. The world of appetite was a foreign realm to him. He looked with contempt on men who lost themselves in its meshes. But he was a hard man, the people said, and selfishness and a cold heart were far worse vices in the eyes of the generous-hearted, rough miners who came and went among these hills, than what the polished, cold, calculating money-getters of the far-off city counted as sin. So Andrew Malden was more of a sinner in the estimation of Gold City than Yankee Sam. Perhaps the ethics of that mining camp were truer than the world thinks. Perhaps he who sins against society is worse than he who sins against self.

The fact was that, though Andrew Malden had grown old in Grizzly county, and no face was more familiar, no one knew him. He was a hard man, but not as the people meant. There are two kinds of stern men in this world: Those who are without hearts, who take pleasure in the suffering of others; and those who, repulsed sometime, somewhere, have closed the portals of their inmost souls and hid away within themselves. Such was the "Lord of Pine Tree Mountain," as the boys used to call him.

Once he was a merry, happy, strong mountain lad in the old Kentucky hills, where he had helped his father, a hardy New Englander, make a new home. He had a heart in those old days. He loved the

hills and forests; loved the romping dogs that played around him as he drove the logging team to the river-mill; aye, more than that, he had loved Mary Moore. She was bright and sweet and pretty, a bewitching maid, who seemed all out of place on the frontier. He loved to hear her talk of Charleston Bay and the Berkshire Hills, and of the days when she danced the minuet on Cambridge Green. Once he asked her to marry him. It was the month the war broke out with Mexico. The frontiersmen were slinging down their axes and swinging their guns across their shoulders. She laughed, and said that if Andy would go and fight and come home a hero, she would marry him — perhaps.

So he went. Tramped over miles and miles of Mexican soil, fought at Monterey and Buena Vista, endured and almost died — men said for love of Yankeedom; he knew it was for Mary Moore.

The war over, he came back a hero, and Col. Malden was named with old Zach Taylor by tried, loyal men. But Mary Moore was gone. She had found another hero. Gone to Massachusetts, so they said.

That night, Andy Malden left the Kentucky hills forever. The news of gold in California was in the air. He would join the mad procession that, over plain and isthmus, was going hither. He would go as far from the old life as deserts and mountains would put him.

So he came to Gold City. With a diligence far more systematic than the others, he had washed the gold from Frost Creek and off Mormon Bar. Other men lost all they found in daylight over the gaming table at midnight. He never gambled. All the others who succeeded went below to the great city or back to the States to enjoy their gains. He cared naught for the city, he hated the States; he never went. In a solitary mountain spot amid immeasurable grandeur, he buried himself in his lonely cabin. Yet he was not a hermit. He mingled with the crowd; he sought its suffrage for public office; yet he was not of it. He was a mystery to all. They elected him to office and continued to do so; why, they never knew, unless it was because he could save for them when others could not.

At last he married a farmer's girl from the plains, who had come up there to teach the Frost Creek school. She failed as a teacher. She was born for the kitchen and farm. Andrew Malden saw it. She would make him as good a helpmate as any, better than the Chinese women and half-breeds with whom some of his neighbors consorted, so he married.

The mines were giving out. His keen eye saw there were mines above ground as well as below. He quietly left off placer mining, drew out some gold from a hidden purse, and, before the world of Gold City knew it, had nine hundred acres on Pine Tree Mountain, a big saw-mill going, a nice ranch home, and barns like folks back in the States.

At last a baby came — a baby boy; almost the first in Grizzly county. The neighbors would have cheered if they dared. Judge Lawson did dare to suggest a celebration, but the people were afraid of the stern man on Pine Tree Mountain.

Oh, how he loved that boy! His wife looked on with wonder, for she thought he knew not what stuff love was made of. It was not long. A few short years, and the lad, who seemed so strangely merry for a son of Andy Malden, grew pale and took the fever and died; and, where the pine trees stoop to shade the mountain flowers in hot midsummer, strange Yankee Sam and Andy, all alone, laid him to rest. There was no clergyman. The "Gospel Peddlers," as the miners called them, had not yet come to the hills to stay. Just as Sam was putting the soil over the rough box, Andy stopped him and muttered something about the boy's prayer. He must say it for him, and he whispered in a broken voice, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep."

That was the last prayer Andrew Malden had uttered. Many years had come and gone; more and more he had lived within himself. He used to go to the boy's grave on holidays. Now he never went. For years his wife had lived with him and kept his house and prepared his food, and grown, like him, silent and apart from all around. She died at last and he gave her a high-toned funeral; had a coffin from the city and a preacher and all that. She had died of loneliness. He did not know it. She did not realize it. He went on as if it was a matter of course. The old house was kept up carefully; a Chinaman, as silent as himself, kept it for him, and a corps of men kept him busy at the mill.

He was rich, the people said; he was mean and grinding, the men muttered; and yet he prospered when others failed. Men envied, feared, hated him. Now he was growing old and men were wondering who would have his riches when he was gone. He had no kin this side the Ohio; and, for aught he knew, nowhere. His wife's nephews and cousins, pegging away in these hills, were beginning to build air-castles of days when the Pine Tree mill should be theirs.

Such was the old man who drove along in the moonlight, past Mormon Bar and over Chichilla Hill, holding a sleeping lad in his arms; and feeling, for the first time in years, the heart within him.

It was nearer dawn than midnight when the tired team, which had been slowly creeping up the mountain road for hours, turned into the lane above the mill and waited for their owner to swing open the gate which barred the way to the private road leading through the oak pasture to Pine Tree Ranch and home. It was one of those matchless nights that come only in the mountains, when the world is flooded with a soft, silvery light and the great trees stand out transfigured against the sky, amid a silence profound and awe-inspiring.

It had been a long ride; aye, a long one indeed to Andrew Malden. He had traveled across more than half a century of life since they left Gold City. His own childhood, Mary Moore, old Kentucky, had all come back to him. Then he had thought of that silent grave down beyond Gold City, and of the large part of his life buried there. He turned to the lad at his side, sleeping unconscious of life's ills and disappointments, of which, poor boy, he had already had his share. The sight of the innocent face thrilled the old man. In his slumbers the boy murmured, "Mamma, papa;" and, turning, the old man did a strange thing for him. He leaned over and kissed the lad, and whispered, "Mamma, papa! Boy, as long as Andy Malden lives, he shall be both to you."

When they reached the house, he hushed the dogs to silence, bade Hans, who stared astonished at his master's guest, to take the horses; and, lifting the sleeping form, carried it into his room, and, gently removing coat and shoes, laid the boy in the great bed, while he prepared to stretch himself on a couch near by.

That night a new life came to Andrew Malden and the Pine Tree Ranch.

CHAPTER III.

THE HORSE-RACE.

"YER darsn't do it! Yer old Malden's slave, yer know yer are, and yer darsn't breathe 'less he says so."

It was in front of the Miners' Home in Gold City, and the speaker was an overgrown, brawny, low-browed boy of some seventeen years, who, in ragged clothes and an old slouch hat, leaned against the post that helped support the tumble-down roof of that notorious establishment. In front of him, barefooted and in overalls rolled up over well-browned legs, old blue cap, astride a little black pony whose eyes rolled appreciatively as he lovingly half leaned upon her

neck, sat Job Malden, as the store-keepers called him; or "Andy's Tenderfoot," as the boys dubbed him.

You would not have dreamed, had you seen him, that this brown-skinned, tall fifteen-year-old, who rose in his saddle at this remark and spoke out sharp and strong, was the same pale-faced city lad who had come in the stage three years ago, homeless and friendless. The mountains had done wonders for him; the pallor had gone from his cheeks; the sun had tanned his shapely limbs; the wild life of nature and the still rougher world of humanity had roused all his temper and passion. Yet, withal, there was the touch of another world in his face. No stranger, at second view, would have taken him for a native born. He had known a different realm, and it had left its trace in a high brow, a fine face, a clearer eye than one usually saw on the streets of the mining camp.

"Yer darsn't do it!" leered again the same contemptible fellow. "Yer a city kid an' hain't got sand 'nuff to make an ant-hill. I hearn tell yer get the old man to button yer clothes, and yer cry in the dark — guess it's so, ain't it, tenderfoot?"

At this remark the crowd of loungers around broke forth into cheers, and Job's eyes, usually so blue, flashed fire. He sprang from Bess' back, and, in an instant, had struck the bully a blow that sent him reeling back into the arms of Yankee Sam. A moment, and a general mêlee seemed imminent, when Dan Dean stepped up and called a halt. He was the smoothest, most affable, meanest fellow in town, nephew by marriage to the lord of Pine Tree Mountain, and, as he had always boasted, the lord that was to be.

Job had always felt, ever since he came to Grizzly county, that Dan was his mortal enemy, yet he had always been so sly Job had never been able to prove him guilty of any one of the thousand petty annoyances he was sure were instigated by him.

Taking Job by the arm, Dan now led him off to one side, while the crowd were laughing at the blubbering bully backing up the street and threatening all sorts of vengeance on "that tenderfoot."

All the trouble was over a horse-race. It was coming off next Sunday down at Coyote Valley, four miles below town. Pete Wilkins had offered his horse against all Grizzly county, and Dan Dean had boasted that he had a horse, a black mare — or at least his Uncle Andy had — that could beat any horse Pete could trot out. Pete had dared him to appear with the mare; and Dan, well knowing he could not get her, was doing his best to induce Job to steal away with her and run the race for him. "Me and yer is cousins, yer know, seein' yer call the old man uncle and he's my sure-enough uncle; so we's cousins, and we ought to be pardners; now yer run the race, get the gold nugget the fellows at the Yellow Jacket have put up, and I'll get Pete's bet, and my! won't we have a lark! Fact is, yer don't want fellers to think yer a baby, I know; and, as for its being Sunday, I say the better the day the better the deed. Come, Job, I jest want to see the old black mare come in across the line and you on her! My! what a hot one yer'll be! The fellers will never call yer tenderfoot again!"

It was a big temptation to Job, the biggest the boy had ever known — to beat Pete; to show off Bess; to prove he was no "tenderfoot" or "kid" any more. But — oh, that but! — how could he deceive Mr. Malden! And then, Sunday, too!

"Gold nugget! Whew! Such a chance!" insidious Dan still kept crying, till Job shut his teeth together, turned from his mother's face which, somehow, persisted in haunting him just then, laughed a sort of hollow laugh, and said with an oath — the first he had ever uttered out loud — that sure he would be there and show these Gold City bullies and Pete and the whole crowd he was nobody's slave. Yet, as he said it, there came a sort of feeling into his soul which he repelled, but which yet came back again,

that he was now indeed a slave — a slave to Dan, a slave to the Evil One.

Coyote Valley was all alive. Vaqueros from the foot-hill ranches were tearing up and down the dusty road along Coyote Creek from Wilkins' ranch to the foot of the valley, buck-boards loaded with Mexicans, Joe's stage creaking beneath the weight of half the roughs of Gold City, groups of excited miners on foot, were making their way as fast as possible to Wilkins' old hay barn, which had been turned into a combination of saloon and grand stand. Under the shade of an immense live-oak just west of the barn, the big waiter at the Miners' Home was running an opposition saloon to the one inside, with a plank on two kegs for a bar. The center of the barn was already filled with dark-skinned Señoritas and tall, gawky miners dancing to the music of a squeaky violin.

The air was filled with dust and bets and oaths, when on that strange Sunday morning Job galloped up Coyote Valley and pulled up in time to hear Dan's voice in high pitch cry out:

"There she is, the best mare in Grizzly county; ten to one against the crowd! Come in, Job; come up, boys! Let's have a drink around to the success of the Hon. Job Malden, the slickest rider in all the hills!"

Almost before he knew it, Job was hauled bodily up to the bar and had a beer glass in his hand. How strange he felt! How queer it all was! He had been in the mountains three years, but this was his first Sunday picnic.

Andrew Malden, though he had no religion, had always seen that Job went to Sunday-school at the Frost Creek School. To-day he had ostensibly started for there. But this was very different from the old log school-house.

How different Job looked from the rest! He wore "store clothes" and a neck-tie. In the rush, something dropped on the floor. He looked down and picked it up, with a quick glance around, while a great lump came into his throat. It was a little Testament, his mother's, the one she had given him the day she died, and there was the old temperance pledge he had signed in a boy's scrawling hand. He was supposed to be at Sunday-school, so he had been obliged to carry the book.

For a moment he hesitated, then he jammed it in his pocket out of sight. He hated it, he hated himself. The step was taken; he took the glass, he drank with the rest. He left the bar with a proud air. He was a man. He would win that race or die.

All day long the violin squeaked, the clattering feet resounded on the barn floor, the kegs were emptied into throats, and races of all kinds — fat men's races, women's races, old men's races — followed each other. At last, the great event was called — Malden's mare against Pete's noted plunger. The Vaqueros cleared the way, a pistol shot in the distance announced they had started, a cloud of dust that they were coming. It was not a trot; it was a neck-and-neck run, such as Job had taken hundreds of times over the great pasture lot on Pine Tree Ranch. He was perfectly at home. With arms clasped around her neck, he urged Bess on; he sang, he coaxed, he cheered her. Bess knew that voice, and, catching the passion of the hour, fairly flew. Faster and faster she went, but faster and faster came Pete at her heels—now Job felt the hot breath of the other horse on his cheek — now they fell back — now they were close behind him. They were near the line — but a hundred paces and the old oak would be passed. Pete was desperate; the fire of anger was in his eyes. Job heard one of Pete's excited friends shout, "Throw him, Pete!" The thought of awful danger flew through Job's mind: The angry man would do it — Bess must go faster. She was white with foam now, but go she must. He hugged her closer; he sang — how out of place the piece

seemed! 'Twas the song, though, that always roused her, so he sang it, as so often he had sung it in the great oak pasture of the home ranch — "Palms of victory, crowns of glory I shall wear," — and, singing it, dashed across the line the victor, while the mob yelled and Dan hugged Bess and the waiter offered a free treat to the whole crowd. Job Malden had won the race, the gold nugget was his, but oh, how much he had lost!

CHAPTER IV.

JANE.

"Wait till the clouds roll by, Jennie,
Wait till the clouds roll by."

IT WAS the clear, high voice of a rosy-cheeked, black-eyed, short-skirted, bare-footed maiden that sang, who, with her long black tresses blowing in the afternoon breeze, and a pail on her arm, was gayly skipping down the narrow road that separated the fence of Pine Tree Ranch from the endless forest that stretched away towards the big trees and Yosemite. "'Wait till the clouds' — gracious sakes, boy! what did you scare me for?" Jane Reed cried, as out of the dark woods, around a sugar pine, a tall, tanned lad strode, with gun over his shoulder, and a long-eared dog at his heels.

"Oh, just for ducks!" said Job Malden, who, after a celebration of his sixteenth birthday, was returning from one of his favorite quail hunts with "Shot," his only playmate on Pine Tree Ranch.

"Where did you get those shoes, sissy?" said the boy, looking at her bare, bronzed feet.

"From the Lord," quietly answered the girl.

"Humph!" said Job with a sneer, "the only lord I know is the one of Pine Tree Mountain, and the one that is to be — that's myself — and I'm mighty sure he or I never made such looking things."

At this, the girl made an unsuccessful attempts to run past him, then sank down on the ground in a big cry.

With the heartless, contemptuous air of a boy who scorns tears and girls, Job stood there; and, posing dramatically, sang in a falsetto voice:

"Wait till the clouds roll by, Jennie,
Wait till the clouds roll by."

I wonder, if his mother could have come back from her far-off grave by the Sacramento, whether she would have known that insolent, rude fellow standing there as her pretty, blue-eyed boy whom she had so tenderly loved.

How quickly, when a fellow starts down hill, he gets under way! That first Sunday picnic had borne its fruit. The Sunday-school at Frost Creek never knew him now. That little Testament was at the bottom of his trunk. Fear of the old man had saved him from an open life of wrong, and a certain pride made him disdain to be on a level with Dan Dean and the Gold City gang. Andrew Malden saw the change and yet did not understand it. He never talked with people enough to hear the rumors afloat of the Sunday horse-races, or of the midnight revel on the Fourth of July at the Yellow Jacket. The night that Bess came home saddleless and riderless, with the white foam on her, and when he searched till near morning, to at last find Job stretched in a stupor by the wayside down the Chichilla road, he thought the boy's after story was true — that story of a frightened runaway — and little knew it was Pete Wilkins' whisky that had thrown him.

Ah! it was only yesterday the old man had said, "She was a traitor, and so is the boy. I have loved him, fed him, sheltered him, and yet all he cares for is to get my money some day. The world's all alike!" And Andrew Malden shut the door of his heart, which, a few short years ago, had swung open for the homeless lad.

It was this boy, touched, alas! not alone by the beauty and grandeur of the mountains, but by the shame and sin of the men who dwelt among them, that now laughed at a poor girl's feeble wrath. He laughed, and then a spark of innate good-nature and manhood touched him, and, picking up the pail, he muttered an apology and offered to escort the maiden home.

Very soon the clouds did roll by, and under the sky of twilight the pair walked leisurely along the trail that passed out of the main road, up across Sugar Pine Hill and down towards Blackberry Valley and old Tom Reed's cabin, where Jane was both daughter and mistress.

This girl was so different from the crowd he had seen at Wilkins' barn and down at Mike's, that he could not joke her; he could only play the gallant, and he rather liked it.

It was a long way over the hill and many stops to rest — at Deer Spring, Squirrel Run and the Summit — and the picking up cones made it longer. It was just as they crossed the hill that they heard a crackling of the branches above them, and both looked up to be struck with terror. Climbing from one great tree to another was the low, dark form of a mountain lion. He did not notice them. Job motioned silence and shrunk into the bushes. The girl instinctively followed and drew up close to him. With gun cocked and bated breath, they waited and waited; but whether the wind was away from them, or the vicious animal had something else in view, he slunk away in the trees and out toward the Gulch, where he made his lair.

For a half hour Jane and Job sat with hearts beating fast, while both tried to make a show of being brave. How strange it seemed to Job to be thus protecting a girl! He felt a queer interest in her; he did not know what it was. He took her arm a little later to help her over the rocks, down the hill. He lingered, in a bashful way, at the spring at the foot of the path to see that she got to the cabin door safely, then went around by the main road home, so slowly and so thoughtfully that the moon was high when Shot barked a response to Carlo's bark as he entered the gate.

That was not the last time he saw Jane Reed. A something of which he had never heard and of which he was barely conscious drew him to her. That autumn he often walked home from school with her. When the snows came and the logging sleds were passing every day loaded for Andrew Malden's mill, he always managed to find Jane at Sugar Pine Hill at all odd sorts of hours and give her a ride to the mill on the top of the logs, and walk back with her, as he let the horses tug the old sled slowly up the mountain. The only rival he had was Dan, his pretended friend but certain enemy.

It was at the time of the big snow. Indian Bill, the rheumatic old native trapper whose family had perished at the massacre of the Yosemite some years before, and who ever since had lived in a little cabin on the edge of the Gulch, said it was the biggest in two hundred moons.

When Job, shivering and chattering, looked out of the little, narrow, cheerless upstairs room which he called his own, he found himself apparently in the first story. He gazed on the endless drifts of snow that rolled away in a silent sea over barn and fences, with only the shaggy, white-bearded pines shaking their faces at him above the limitless white. The little ravine back of the house, where the milk-house stood, had leveled up to the rest of the world, the chicken corral was missing, and only the loft of the old barn rose above the snowy waves.

What a busy day that was of shoveling tunnels, and, with the full force of the mill men and all the logging teams, breaking a path up the road to the logging camp! By night the whole country round was out. Dan was there riding the leader, and reaching out to get snowballs from the high bank to throw at Jane, who had clambered up on

the vantage point of an old shed and was watching the queer procession, with its shouts and rattle of bells and chains, push its way up the road.

That night old Andy Malden gave a treat to all the hands at the mill, with hard cider and apples and nuts a plenty, and even had Blind Dick, the fiddler, who lived in Tom Reed's upper cabin, to help them make merry. That is, Andy gave the treat, but his foreman was host; he never came himself. Jane was there and Dan monopolized her. He knew her well, so that night he never danced, never drank; but Job, poor fellow! asked her to dance and she refused him; then he offered her cider, and her great black eyes snapped fire and she turned from him. He was mad with rage. He drank. He danced with the Alviso girls, the lowest Mexicans in the county. He glared after Dan as he saw him start off with Jane.

The cider, the jealousy in his soul, or the evil in both, probably, made him start after them. A something whispered to take the short-cut across to the junction of the road and Blackberry Valley trail, and face them and have it out. He hurried stumbling over the drifts. He hid in the shade of a great tree. Up the road he heard them coming, heard Dan say, "Oh, well, I was afraid Uncle Andy would be fooled when he took that kid in. Regular chip of the old block; his father went to the bad, and he is going fast. He came from the city slums; none of the brave, true blood of the mountains in his veins. Steer clear of him, Jane." Heard an indistinguishable reply in Jane's voice, felt a blind passion rising within him, clinched his fists, started with a bound for the dark shadows coming up the road, felt a terrible blow on his head, and — well, it must have been a long while before he thought again. Then he was lying down in the depths of a snow-drift, where he had fallen when he started so angrily for Dan and had struck his head against the limb of the old oak at the turn and been hurled back twenty feet down through the snow on the rock of the creek bed.

He hid in the shade of a tree.

He tried to rise, but could not. A broken limb refused to act. He called for help, but the cry rose no higher than the snow-bank. He was in an open grave of white on the sharp rocks and bitterly cold ice of

the stream. He shivered and shook, then gradually a sort of delightful repose began to steal over him. At first it felt pleasant, then he realized he was freezing, freezing to death! Death! The thought struck terror to his heart. Death! It was the last thing for which he was ready. Memory was unnaturally active. The New England hills, the white church, grandfather, mother, home, all came back to him. He was mother's boy again as in those old days before hate and drink and sin had hurt his life. For a moment the tears came. He forgot himself, he struggled to rise. He would go to mother and put his head in her lap and tell her he loved her still. Then the clouds crept over the stars, the bitter wind whistled above the snow. Mother — ah! He could not go to her; she had gone forever out of his life; never in this world would he see her again. And then, like a knife that cut him through and through, came the bitter consciousness that there was no hope of seeing mother in the world to come; that long ago he had gone away from her and the old innocent life of childhood so far that if she could come back from her grave by the turbid Sacramento, she would not even know her boy.

The night chill crept over him; the tears froze on his cheeks. He thought of Dan and Jane and the life he had lived, and love froze in his heart. And then, alone in the snow-drift, dying, he hated Dan, he hated Jane, he hated all the world and hated God, and waited, with the fear of a lost soul, the outer darkness that was coming — coming nearer and nearer.

They found him there, numb and unconscious, long after midnight, Hans and Tony, Malden's men, who had searched for him.

The snow had melted on the hill-tops and the flowers were peeping above the earth, when Job threw aside his crutches and whistled to Shot that the time had come for another quail hunt.

CHAPTER V.

THE CAMP MEETING.

"IT'S THE biggest thing out — beats a horse-race! My! it's a sight! Don't miss it, boys. See you all down at Wilkins', sure."

It was "Nickel John" who was speaking, the fellow that the boys said would do any evil deed for a nickel. It was down in front of the Miners' Home among a great crowd of the boys, in the midst of whom stood Job as an interested listener.

The coming event was no less than a Methodist camp-meeting down in Coyote Valley the next Sunday. Of course he would go, said Job, as he rode home; anything nowadays to avoid being alone with himself. Up at the mill he told the fellows about it; and, when they dared him to be there and go to the altar, he vowed that he would do it.

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall."

Strong and clear, a great volume of sound, it rang out on the air that never-to-be-forgotten Sunday morning, as Job rode Bess up the Coyote road to Pete Wilkins' barn, now transformed into a sanctuary where the Sierra District Camp-meeting was well under way.

"Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

The rafters of the barn shook with the music, while it rolled out through the great side and rear doors, thrown open so wide that the old building looked like outdoors with a roof on. The big structure was full to the doors, while around it all sorts of vehicles and nags were hitched. To the right and left rows of tents stretched away. Just outside, under the old oak, a portly dame was dishing out lemonade for a nickel to late-comers, while a group of boys were playing leap-frog. Job struggled through

the outer crowd and pushed inside, only to find himself in the center of "the gang," who greeted him with a wink and a whisper, "The speakin' racket's next!"

"Oh, that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!"

How grand it sounded! Such a host of voices were singing! Far up in front, on a platform, surrounded by several preachers, gray-haired and young, in varied attire, from the conventional black suit and white tie to a farmer's outfit, was a little organ, and a familiar form was sitting back of it and getting its old bellows to roll out the hymn. The organist was no other than Jane, and her face flushed as she caught Job's eye.

Just then the music stopped and a sweet-faced old man stepped up and said, "Brethren and sisters, we have knelt at the Lord's table; let us now tell of the Lord's love. Let us have fifty testimonies in the next few minutes. Let us sing, 'I love to tell the story of Jesus and his love.'"

The scene faded away; the music was a far-off echo, the barn was gone. Job was back, a lad, in the old New England church; grandsir was there, and mother, and the old, old friends, and Ned Winthrop was poking him with a pin. That song! — how it brought them all back!

Just then he heard a murmur behind him, and looked up to see, near the front, a trembling old man rise and begin to speak. He told of boyhood days; he told of a young man's sins; of how one day on the old camp ground back in York State he had learned that God loved him and could make a man of him. Then he faltered as he told a story of sorrows, and how at last, alone in the world, he awaited the angels that should bear him home.

Job trembled. Unpleasant memories arose in his heart. He grew pale and red, then bit his lips in excitement. He wished he was at home. Testimony followed testimony. Love, peace and joy rang through all. At last Jane rose — could it be possible? He hung on every word.

"Last night, down there at the bench, the Lord converted my soul. I have been a poor sinner, but I know Jesus loves me, and I wish — I wish," and she looked over to the far rear, "you would let him save you;" and she sat down in tears.

Job was wildly angry. "The mischief take her!" he muttered. And Dan leaned over and whispered, "See, she's gone daft, like the rest!"

The testimonies and love-feast were over, a prayer that made Job feel as if Some One great and good was near, had been offered, and then it was announced that the Rev. William Pendergast of Calavero circuit would preach.

"What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

It was a young, fresh, boyish face that looked into Job's as the speaker uttered these words. Just such a bright, athletic, noble fellow as every true boy secretly wishes to be. He caught Job's attention and held it.

This was a very different thing from what he had thought sermons to be. The young man talked of life here, not hereafter; he showed how a man may live in this world and yet live a lost life; have gold and lands, and yet lose all love and hope and peace and manhood. He pictured the man who gains wealth and grows hard and loveless, and Job thought of Andy Malden; he told of him who plunges into dissipation and drink, and lingers a wreck in the streets, and Job knew he meant Yankee Sam. Aye, he pictured a young life that grasps all the world and forgets right and God and mother's Bible and mother's prayers, and grows selfish and the slave of hate and trembles lest death come, and Job thought of himself and the awful night in the snow and wished he was miles away.

But wait! They are singing:

"Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore."

They have cleared the mourners' bench and are giving the invitation:

"Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and power."

Job trembles. Does that mean him? Tim Nolan the mill-man leans over and whispers almost out loud: "Remember your bet, Job!"

Poor Job would have given all the gold in the Sierras to be out of there. All the sins of his life rose before him, all his conceit and boasting vanished. He was ashamed of Job Malden. He longed to sink somewhere out of sight.

The preacher was talking again; the old, old story of the Prodigal Son and how God's arms are always ready to take in a mother's lost boy. The room swam before Job's eyes. The crowds were flocking to the altar, the people were shouting, the boys were punching him and saying. "Yer dursn't go!" Heaven, hell, sin and Christ were very real to him all of a sudden.

"All the fitness he requireth
Is to feel your need of him."

How it happened he never knew, but just as Dan said, "Now, let's see Job get religion," he rose, and, striding down the long aisle, he rushed to the altar, and there, just where he had taken his first drink on that awful Sunday, he threw himself in tears, a big, heart-broken boy, with the thought of his evil life throbbing through his brain.

It was late that night when Job left the camp ground, flung himself across Bess' back and started home. The stars never looked down on a happier boy. The burden, the hate, the bitterness in his heart, were all gone. A holy love, an exaltation of soul, an awakening of all that is best in a manly life, stirred him. The past was gone; "old things had passed away and all things had become new." The world was the same. Dan, with all his meanness, was in it. The saloon doors were open, the gamblers still sat at midnight at the Monte Carlo. Grizzly county had not changed, but he had. A new life was his.

As he galloped down the road, far away he heard them singing:

"Palms of victory, crowns of glory, I shall wear,"

and a strange feeling came over him. He took up the refrain, and, looking up at the stars, he seemed to see his mother's face afar off among the flashing worlds. The tears stole down his cheeks, tears of joy, as, galloping on through the night toward home, again he sang:

"Palms of victory, crowns of glory, I shall wear."

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEANS.

IT WAS a little, long, low, unpainted shanty, with a rude doorstep, almost hid amid a jungle of vines and overarching trees at the end of a long lane, where Marshall Dean lived. A sallow-faced, thin Kentuckian, he had come up here from the plains after his sister married Andrew Malden, in the hope that being near a rich relative would save him from unnecessary labor. Andrew Malden had given him a good place at the mill, but he found it too hard on his muscles, and so decided to "ranch it." Malden had then given him the old Jones ranch and a start; but as the years drifted by he had not succeeded in raising much except a numerous family of dirty, unkempt youngsters of whom Dan was the oldest and the most promising specimen, the one who had inherited his father's pride and selfishness, with a certain natural shrewdness and sagacity that his mother's family possessed, but of which she had failed to receive much.

While Malden's wife lived, they managed to silently share in the income of Pine Tree Ranch, but after she died the smuggling

business between the big place and Dean's Lane suddenly stopped. Nothing ever cut deeper — they could never forgive her for dying. At last they settled down to a stolid, long wait for the old man's end. The chief theme of conversation at home was the uncertainties of life for the "old miser," and the sure probability of their move some day on to the big ranch, though not one of them knew what they would do with it if they got it. Dan felt no hesitation about telling this at school, and it was common gossip of the county.

But alas! the night Dan came home and excitedly told the family, as they looked up from their rough board table and bacon and mush and molasses, that "the old man had taken Teale's kid in, sure he had," consternation seized them. It took them weeks to rally; and, when they did, for the first time in their history the family had an object in life, and that was to make life miserable for Job.

Unsuspecting and innocent, the twelve-year-old lad had gone over to play with the Dean children, as he would at any home, till the time when petty persecutions culminated in all the rude youngsters calling him vile names and throwing stones at him, and the father standing by and drawling out, "Give it to him, the ornery critter!"

Annoyance followed annoyance. Job's pets always got hurt or disappeared. Dick, his first pony, was accidentally lamed for life; the big dog he romped with was found dead from poison. All the mischief in the neighborhood was eventually laid at Job's door. For a long time the boy systematically avoided the Deans, till by some strange political fortune Marshall Dean was appointed postmaster for the Pine Mountain post-office. That was a gala day in Deans' Lane. Sally Dean had a brand-new dress on the strength of it, and Dan gave himself more airs than ever before. After that Job was obliged to go to the Deans' twice a week for the mail, and more than once went away with the suspicion that Andrew Malden's mail had been well inspected before it left the office.

The wrath of the Dean family reached its culmination on that Sunday night when Dan came home with the news that Job had attended the Coyote Valley camp-meeting and had been converted; "now he would be putting on holy airs and setting himself above folks." That night in Dean's shanty Sally and Dan and "Pap" put their heads together to plan how they could in some way make Job Malden backslide.

It was toward this house that Job was making his way, on the very next week, bound for the semi-weekly mail. As he went up the path old Dean himself rose to meet him; and, putting up his pipe, remarked on the "uncommon fine morning." As he pushed open the shanty door, Mrs. Dean and fifteen-year-old Sally were all smiles. The postman had brought no mail, the former said, but wouldn't he stay and rest? She had heard the Methodists were having a fandango down in the valley. Queer people, whose religion consisted in shouting and jumping. As for her, she believed in practical religion; she paid her honest debts and didn't set herself up above her neighbors.

Job was just leaving, when Mrs. Dean said:

"Oh, you mustn't go without drinking to Sally's health — she's fifteen to-day. See what a big girl she is — what rosy cheeks and big hands! Come, we have the finest cider out; just drink with us to Sally's health."

"Why, excuse me, ma'am," stammered Job, quite bewildered by this sudden good-nature and the invitation to drink. Why — I can't drink any more — I —"

"Oh, my!" said Mrs. Dean. "You're all straight! This won't be too much, if you have drank before this afternoon."

"Oh, but —" stammered Job, "I don't mean that. I don't drink any more — I have joined the Methodists and been converted."

"Such a likely boy as you gone and jined

the fools! Surely Andy Malden don't know it, does he?"

"Why — no," stammered Job.

"Waal, now, purty feller you are, to take your bread and butter from Andy Malden, and then go and disgrace him by joinin' the hypocrites and never tellin' him, and then comin' round here and refusin' to drink harmless apple juice with our Sally! Puttin' yourself up above respectable people like us, whose parents lie in respectable graves!"

Job faltered. That speech cut. The hot blood came to his brow. A week ago he would have lost his temper, but now he bit his lip and kept still.

Then the woman's mood changed. She wished him no ill luck, she said, and surely he would be good enough if he was as good as his Master, and she "'lowed that Christ drank wine at a wedding spread onct. Surely he wouldn't refuse a little cider with Sally?"

Perhaps it would be best. Perhaps he was trying to be too good. Aye, perhaps one drink would give him a good chance to escape. So Job thought, and he took the glass. But then came a vision of that bar at the horse-race, of that cider at Malden's mill, and the winter night and the snow, and his hand in his pocket touched the old temperance pledge he had signed again on Sunday night when he got home, and up from his heart went a silent cry for help. At that, he seemed to hear a voice saying, "With every temptation, a way of escape," and he said in a firm voice, as he sat down the glass:

"Best wishes for Sally, Mrs. Dean, but I cannot drink the cider."

Just then a shrill cry from outside sent both Sally and her mother flying to help rescue three-year-old Ross, whose father was hauling him out of the well.

In the excitement, Job started home with a light heart, singing to himself:

"Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin,
Each victory will help you some other to win."

CHAPTER VII.

THE OLD MAN'S BIRTHDAY.

THEY were sitting together at Pine Tree Ranch, on the side porch of the neat little white farmhouse, over which the vines were trained and from which the well-kept lawn and flower-bordered walks rolled away to the white picket fence. It was a late August evening, which had merged from sunset into moonlight so softly and quietly that one hardly knew when the one began and the other ended. Job, in old coat and overalls and a broken straw hat, just as he had come in from his evening chores, sat on the veranda's edge. Back of him, in a low-bottomed, old cane rocker, was Andrew Malden in a rough suit of gray, his white beard reaching far down on his breast, while his silver locks were blowing in the breeze.

For once, at least, he was opening his heart and memory to the lad whom he secretly loved; the lad who often wondered why the latch string of Pine Tree Ranch was out for him, and what matter would it be if some day, when he and Bess went off over the Chichilla hills, they never came back again.

To-night the old man was talkative. It was his birthday and he was in retrospective mood. "Seventy to-night, Job — just to think of it! Twenty years more, perhaps, and then — well, a coffin, I suppose, and six feet of ground — and that's all," he said.

Job wanted to say, "And heaven," but he did not dare. And then a thought startled him: Was this man, who had gained this world, ready for any other?

For an hour Andrew Malden rambled on. He talked of the Mexican war; told of Vera Cruz and the battle of Monterey. "Bravest thing you ever saw, boy. One of those Greasers rode square up to our line and flung a taunt in our faces, and rode away in disdain, while all our batteries opened on him."

He came to the close of the war stories, when he suddenly stopped and grew silent, puffed at an old pipe, rose and walked back and forth. He was thinking of that day when he had come back so proudly to claim Mary Moore, and had found the blow under which he had staggered for nearly forty years.

"You've heard of Lincoln, my boy — old Abe Lincoln? Well, I knew him when we were boys," he said, as he sat down again. Then he told story after story of the long, lean, lank Kentucky boy, who rode a raft down the Mississippi and helped clear the frontier forests; the boy who was one day to strike a blow for right that would shake a continent.

Andrew Malden laughed till Job caught the contagion and laughed, too, as story followed story. Then, after another silence, he went on again:

"Dead! Abe Lincoln's dead, and Zach Taylor's dead — and so the world goes. 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,' the Bible says. My father used to read it to us boys, when I was your age. It's true, my boy. Have as little to do with the world as you can, except to get an honest living out of it — a living anyway. Don't love anybody. It don't pay."

The old man faltered. He got up and paced the porch again, then, coming back, he put his hand on the boy's shoulder, and, looking into his face, said:

"Job, I want to tell you something; seems as if I must to-night."

And there in the clear moonlight, interrupted only by Shot's occasional growl, and the distant hoot of an owl or bark of a coyote, Andrew Malden told his life story to the boy at his side, the boy who was just passing up to young manhood. He told of Mary Moore; of the weary tramp behind an ox-team across the prairies and Nevada desert; of that snow-bound winter near Denver Lake; of the early days of Gold City. He told of his son who slept beneath the graveyard pines; of his own lonely life in the mountains; then he came to that night when he had brought this boy home. He put his arm around the lad as he talked of his interest in him and how he had known more of his sins and downward life than Job ever dreamed.

"Now," he said, "they tell me you have joined the Methodists — have got religion or whatever you call it. Stick to it, boy. Andy Malden's too old to ever change his views. You may be right or not, but anyway I'd rather see you go to Methodist meetin' than Pete's saloon. You're going to have a hard time of it, boy; these pesky Deans, who owe all they are to me, hate you because you are mine. As long as you live with Andy Malden, you will have to suffer. Sometimes I think it ain't worth while — what do you care for an old man?"

Again the voice ceased, and Job trembled, he hardly knew why.

"Boy," up spoke the old man again, "boy, it isn't worth while! I will give you a bag of nuggets, and you can take Bess and go to-morrow down to the city and get some learnin' and be somethin', and be out of this everlastin' quarrelsome world of Grizzly county, and never see the Deans again. I will stand it; I lived alone before you came, and I suppose I can do it again. Only a few years and I will be gone; God knows where — if there is a God."

By this time Job was choked with emotion. All his nature was aroused. He fairly loved this strange old man. Looking up, he begged him not to send him away; stay he would, whatever it cost; and he would be as true a son to him as a strong young fellow could.

At that, the old man rose, went into the house, and came back with something that glittered in his hand.

"Take this, Job, put it in your hip-pocket, and the first time any one of the Deans, big or little, insults you, put a bullet through him."

Job shrank back at sight of the revolver. "No! Oh, no! I can't take that! Down at

the camp-meeting I promised God to love my enemies, uncle. I can't take that."

Then Job poured out his heart to Andrew Malden. He told of his conversion, of his trust in God, and that he was no longer afraid of the Deans or of anything.

"Humph! humph!" said the old man. "Well, I won't argue with you, boy; but as for me, I'd rather trust my hip-pocket when I have to deal with the people of Grizzly county. Do as you please. But I'll keep this revolver, and death to the man that harms a hair of Job Malden, the only one in all the world that Andy Malden loves."

The old man's voice trembled, and he walked into the house and shut the door; and Job knew the talk was over for that night.

Whistling to Shot, he and the dog stole upstairs to Job's little bare room, where a few wood-cuts hung on the wall, and a long, narrow bedstead, a chair, and a box that served for table, were the only furniture. He took the little Testament from under his pillow and lovingly kissed it; then turning, he read for his good-night lesson from his new-found divine Friend: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Kneeling a moment for a good-night prayer, he was soon in bed and asleep, with Shot curled up on the covers at his feet, while through the open window the sound of a guitar came where one of the mill hands was playing the tune of

"Hush, my child, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed."

CHAPTER VIII.

OFF TO THE BIG TREES.

THE radical change that had come into Job's life cut him off from the companions of other days and left him without a chum. It showed the manliness of his nature that as he started out in the new life, seeing quickly that he must part company with the old companions who had nearly wrecked his life, he acted on the conviction at once.

Perhaps it was this, perhaps the fact that his life was now almost altogether on the ranch, that made Job and Bess boon companions. Many a mountain trip they took together. It was on one of these that they went to the Big Trees. That bright September morning, gayly attired with new sombrero and red bandanna above his white outing-shirt, astride Bess, Job rode slowly up the Chichilla mountain on his way to visit those giant trees. Up by "Doc" Trainer's place, over the smooth, hard county turnpike, where the toll-road, ever winding round and round the mountain-side, climbs on through the passes of the live-oak belt to the scraggly pines of the low hills, on to the endless giant forests of the cloud-kissed summits, the young horseman made his way. Now and then the road descended to a little ravine, where a mountain torrent had torn a path to the deep cañons below; again it stretched through a dim, royal arch-way of green where the great trees linked branches as over a king's pathway; and then it turned a bend where the steep sides sank so suddenly that even the trees had no foothold and the bare space disclosed a view over boundless forests of dark green, and the vast, yawning cañons and distant rolling hills, to where, far-off, like some dream of the past, one caught glimpses of the endless plains covered with the autumn haze and golden in the morning sunlight.

The grandeur of the scenery, the roar of the brook in deep cañons below, whose echo he caught from afar, the exhilarating ride, the fresh morning breeze, combined with the spiritual experiences of his nature, which were daily deepening, to rouse all the poetry in Job's soul, of which he had more than the average rough country lad who rode over those eternal hills. He shouted, he whistled patriotic airs and snatches of the

popular songs he heard on the Gold City streets; then the old songs of church and the heart-life came to him, and he sang them, while he laid his head over on Bess' neck as she silently climbed ever higher and higher.

Suddenly Bess gave a start that nearly threw him, as the delicate form of a deer rose behind a fallen tree. For an instant the beautiful animal stood looking with great soft eyes in a bewildered stare at the cause of his sudden awakening, then plunged his horns into the bushes and leaped away down the mountain-side.

Job quickly reached for his rifle, only to discover what he well knew — that it was far away at home; of which he was glad as he thought of those tender, pleading eyes, and a great love for the harmless creature, the forests, the mountains and all the world welled up in his soul. "My!" he said, "I'd like to hug that deer! I'd like to hug everything, everybody! I used to hate them; I would even hug Dan. Bess, dear old girl, I'll just love you!" and he flung his arms around her neck and hummed away as they passed up the hill.

Soon a turn in the road brought them to the summit, where for a moment the trees part and one catches glimpses of the long winding road over which one has come, and the ever-rolling forests beyond, climbing far up to a still higher ridge that reaches toward the Yosemite and the high Sierras. The view thrilled Job. The psalm he had learned for last Sunday came to him. He repeated it solemnly with cap off, as he sat still on Bess' back: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."

Only a moment he paused, and then started on a gallop down the hill. The ring of Bess' feet on the hard road scared the shy gray squirrels, which ran chattering up the tall pines, leaving their feast of nuts on the ground beneath.

"Father of the Forest," Calaveras Grove.

A few minutes later and all the solemnity of his soul and the beauty of the forests was sadly interrupted as he rode round a curve and came out at the junction of the Signal Point and the Yosemite toll-road.

There stood, or lay rather, half on its side, a rickety, old two-seated structure shaded by white canvas supported by four rough-hewn posts. It leaned far to the side on one wheel and a splintered hub. Down the hill a broken wheel was bounding; while, on the dusty road, four women — one tall and angular in a yellow duster, one little and weazened, arrayed in a prim gray traveling

suit, a weeping maiden of uncertain age, and a portly dame of ponderous proportions, dressed not in a duster but a very dusty black silk — were pulling themselves up. Near by three little tots were howling vigorously, yet making no impression on the poor, lone, lank white mare which stood stock still in the shafts, with a contented air that showed an immense satisfaction in the privilege of one good stop.

"Mary Jane, this is awful! Every bone in me is cracked and this silk dress is ruined — yes, is ruined! I tell yer it ain't fit for Mirandy's little gal's doll! And my! I know my heart is broken, too; I can hear it rattle! I'll never come with you and that horrid runaway horse again!"

The poor horse flapped her ears as if in appreciation of this last remark, while Mary Jane, rising up like a yellow-draped beanpole, retorted in a shrill voice:

"Aunt Eliza, ain't you ashamed to be deriding me, a poor lone widder with three helpless children! I hope ye are cracked — cracked bad! Horse, humph! I guess my horse is the likeliest in Grizzly county! Yer know yer made all the trouble; any decent wheel would give way when it had a square mile of bones and stuffin's and silk above it!"

"Now, sister Mary and Aunt Eliza," spoke up, in a thin, metallic voice, that of the diminutive dame in gray, as she adjusted her bonnet strings, "let us not grow unduly aggravated at the disconcerting providence which has overwhelmed us in the journey of life. There are compensating circumstances which should alleviate our sorrow. Our lives are spared, and the immeasurable forests are undisturbed by the trifling event which has overtaken us poor, insignificant creatures, whose — "

"Insignificant!" roared Aunt Eliza, "I guess I ain't insignificant! I own twenty town lots down in Almedy, as purty as yer ever saw. Insignificant! I — the mother of ten children and goodness knows how many grandchildren! And as for them trees that yer say yer can't measure, I'd rather see the clothes-poles in Sally's back yard!"

"Yes," chimed in Mary Jane, "and 'trifles' yer call it, for a poor woman that raises spuds and washes clothes for the men at the mines for a livin', to lose her fine coach Pete built the very year he took sick of the heart-failure and died, and left me a lone widder in a cold and friendless world!" At which she wiped her eyes with the yellow duster.

"'Trifles'!" cried Aunt Eliza again. "'Trifles,' for us poor guileless wimmen to be left here alone in the wilderness, twenty mile from a livin' creature, and nobody knows what wild animals and awful men may come along any minute!"

For a moment Job halted Bess and watched the scene. An almost uncontrollable desire to laugh possessed him; but, restraining himself, he took the first chance he had to make his presence known, at which Aunt Eliza groaned, "Oh, my!" and Mary Jane instinctively grasped her yelling children, and the prim spinster curtsied and asked if he used tobacco. At Job's surprised look and negative reply, she said, "Very well. I never employ a male being who permeates his environment with the noxious weed. As you do not, I will offer you proper remuneration if you will assist us in this unforeseen calamity."

Assuring her that he would, without pay, do all he could, Job went to work. It was well on in the day ere, by his repeated errands down to the big hotel barn some distance below, he had procured enough material to get the rickety old structure in order and help Aunt Eliza back up its high side to the seat she had left so unceremoniously that morning. The last he heard, as the white horse slowly pulled out of sight through the forest, was Aunt Eliza's, "Go slow, Mary Jane, for mercy's sake! Don't let her run away!" while the prim spinster shouted back in a high key, "Good-by, young man! You're a great credit to your sex;" and Mary Jane, pounding the poor mare vigor-

ously, yelled, "G'lang! Get up! We'll never get home!"

It was nearer sunset than it should have been when Job reached the sign-board far up the toll-road that read, "To the Big Trees." Putting spurs to Bess, he galloped on at a rapid pace for a mile or more, when he became conscious that the sugar pines and cedars were giving place to strange trees which had loomed up before him so gradually that he was not aware the far-famed Sequoias, the giants of the forest, were all about him.

"Grizzly Giant," Mariposa Grove.

A dim, strange light filled the place. The twilight was coming fast in that far, lonely spot shaded by the close ranks of the Titanic forms. He walked Bess slowly down the shadowy corridor along the line of those straight giants, whose tapering spires seemed lost in heaven's blue. How long it took to pass a tree! Bess and he were but toys beside them, yet he could scarcely realize their vastness till he slid off her back, and, throwing the rein over her neck, started around one, and lost Bess from view as he turned the corner and walked a full hundred feet before he had encircled the monster. How ponderous the bark, how strangely small the cones!

Mounting Bess, he rode down through the vast aisle of these monarchs of the mountains. A feeling of awe came over him. The world of Gold City and strife and jealousy and struggle, the realm of Mary Jane and Aunt Eliza, the world of petty humanity, seemed far away. He was alone with God and the eternities. Silent he stood, with bared head, and looked along the monster trunks that stretched far up, up, up, towards where the soft blue of evening twilight seemed to rest on them for support. He found himself praying — he could not help it. It was the litany of his soul rising with Nature's silent prayer: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." All through he said it, to the reverent "Amen," then, putting on his hat, rode on toward the farther grove.

On he went past "Grizzly Giant," standing lone and bare, its foliage gone, its old age come — "Grizzly Giant," which was old before Christ was born; on by vigorous saplings, already rivals of the biggest pines. One time-worn veteran had succumbed to some Titanic stroke of Nature's power and lay prostrate on the ground. Decay and many generations of little denizens of the forest had hollowed its great trunk like some vast tunnel. Job, looking in, could see the light in the distance.

It was big enough for Bess and him — he was sure it was; he would try it. So, whispering lovingly to the horse, he rode into the gaping monster, rode through the dark heart of the old giant, clear to the other end and on into daylight. Enthused by his achievement, Job hurried on down the road and around the great curve, to see looming up before him "Wawona," far-famed Wawona, the portal of the silent cathedral through whose wide-spreading base and under whose towering form a coach and six can drive.

The sun was down, the shadows were fast gathering, the great trees were retreating one by one in the gloom, when Job found the little one-roomed log cabin with open door where he had planned to spend the night. Unsaddling Bess and giving her the bag of grain on the back of the saddle, hurriedly eating a lunch, and gathering some sticks for a fire in the old stone fireplace in case he needed one, throwing a drink into his mouth, Indian style, from the spring just back of the cabin, he prepared for the night. A little later, tying Bess securely to the nearest sapling, he closed the cabin door behind him, rolled down the old blankets he found there, and lay down to sleep.

How dark it was! How still the world! A feeling of intense loneliness stole over Job, and then a sense of God's nearness soothed him and he fell asleep.

It must have been after midnight when he awoke with a start, a feeling of something dreadful filling him. He listened. All was still save for Bess' occasional pawing near by. Then he heard a sound that set the blood curdling in his veins, that sent his hair up straight, and made his heart beat like an engine — from far off in the mountains came a weird, heart-breaking cry as of a lost child.

Job knew it well. It was the call of a mountain lion. Again it came, but nearer on the other side. It was voice answering voice. Bess snorted, pawed, and seemed crazed. What should he do? He trembled, hesitated; then, breathing a prayer, he hurriedly opened the cabin door, cut Bess' rope, led her in through the low portal, barred the door behind, and, soothing her with low whispers of tenderness, tied her to the further wall of the cabin, and crept back into bed. Then he lay and waited breathlessly for another cry, and thought all was well, till in a distant moan, far down the road, he heard it again.

For a moment fear almost overpowered him; then the old Psalm whispered, "He that keepeth thee will not slumber nor sleep." A sweet consciousness of the absolute safety of God's children stole over the youth; and catching, from a rift in the roof, one glimpse of the stars struggling through the tree tops, he turned over and fell asleep as peacefully as if in his bed at home.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY.

IT WAS Christmas Sunday when Job was received into full membership in the quaint old Gold City Methodist church. Snow was on the ground, and sleigh bells rang through the air. All day long the streets had been reverberating with that essential of a California Christmas, the fire-cracker. As the preacher came over from Hartsville, the service was in the evening.

The old building looked really fine in its new dress of holly berries, mistletoe and cedar. Across the front was hung in big red and white letters, "Unto us a Child is Born." Over the organ was suspended a large gilt star.

The place was crowded that night. The double fact that it was Christmas, and that the camp-meeting converts would be baptized, brought everybody out.

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

sang the choir as Job, dressed in a neat new suit of gray and "store" shirt, entered the church, making a way for Andy Malden, who, for the first time in untold years, had crossed the threshold of the meeting-house. The arrival, a few minutes before, of Slim Jim the gambler, who hung around the Monte Carlo, and Col. Dick, its proprietor, had not attracted so much attention as the entrance of "Jedge Malden," as the politicians called him who sought his political influence.

The preacher, as he looked down on that audience, was amazed. He had seen no such scene in this old church since, with faint heart, he had first stood in its plain pulpit as pastor. The walls were lined with all the representative characters of the town, good and bad, rich and poor; merchants, bar-keepers, politicians and miners. In the center the old-time church-goers sat. Up the front, filling every inch of space, the starched and well-washed youngsters wriggled and grinned and sang without fear, as hymn after hymn was announced.

All soon caught the spirit of the hour, and a general feeling of good-nature settled down on all. In fact, the place fairly trembled with good-will, as a class of boys marched to the platform and sang:

"The Christmas bells are ringing over land and sea,
The winter winds are bringing their merry notes to me,"

and the wee tots involuntarily turned to the rear as they ended with almost a yell:

"Then shout, boys, shout!
Shout with all your might;
For Merry Christmas 's at the door,
He's coming here to-night!"

On the programme went — recitations, songs, choruses, following close after one another. A fairy-like girl, with all childhood's innocence, told anew the old story of Bethlehem and the Christ Child. The tears stole down some rough cheeks as the memories of long-gone childhood's Christmas days came back to them.

The wee tots had sung their last hymn, when the preacher began his sermon on the angel's song that echoes still each Christmas over all the world: "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will toward men." For twenty minutes he talked of glory, peace, good-will — those things so sadly lacking in many lives before him; talked till each face grew solemn, and Slim Jim looked as if he was far away in some distant memory-world. Andy Malden seemed to hear Peter Cartright, as he had heard him in his father's cabin when a boy, and remembered for the first time in years the night he had promised the eccentric old preacher he would be a Christian — a promise that had been drowned by the drum-beat of the old war days and the disappointment of a lifetime.

As the preacher finished, every man and woman there made a silent resolution to be better-natured and pay their debts and make life a little brighter for somebody. But, alas! resolutions are easily broken.

"The candidates for baptism will please come forward," said the parson.

Up they rose, old and young; Tim Dennis, the cobbler; aged Grandpa Lewis; a score of both sexes. Around the altar they stood, a long semicircle; and, as it so happened, Jane at one end, and Job, with serious, manly air, at the other.

Question after question of the ritual was asked. Clear and strong came the answers. "Wilt thou renounce the devil and all his works?" Jane nodded yes — how little she knew of the devil! Job answered loudly, "I will" — how much he did know! "The vain pomp and glory of the world?" continued the minister; and old Mrs. Smith, who lived alone in the hollow back of the church and had had such a struggle of soul to give up the flowers on her hat that she fancied were too worldly, responded, "Yes," with a groan. "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?" asked the preacher at last. A

unanimous chorus answered, "I will," and, taking the bowl in his hand, he passed down the line of the now kneeling forms and administered the sacred ordinance. Job was last. Leaning over, the parson asked his name, then there rang out through the church, as the eager throng leaned forward to hear and Andrew Malden poked the floor with his cane, "Job Teale Malden, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The service was over. The crowds were pouring out the door, the organist was playing "Marching Through Georgia" on the wheezy organ as the liveliest thing she knew, the people were wishing each other "Merry Christmas," as Job, hurrying out of the church, felt a touch on his shoulder, and, looking up, saw Slim Jim the gambler.

"Job, come out here. I have something to tell you," said he.

Pushing through the throng, they crept around the church in the dark, when Jim, putting his hand on the youth's shoulder, said:

"Job, I remember the night you came to Gold City, what a poor, homeless lad you were! I remember the day you won the horse-race and I said, 'The devil's got the kid now sure.' And now I am so glad, Job, that you've gone and done the square thing. I helped bury your father, and I tell you he was a fine fellow — a gentleman, if he had only let the drink and cards alone. Oh, Job, never touch them! You think it's strange, perhaps, but I was good once, far off in old Pennsylvania. I was a mother's boy, and went to church, and — Job, would you believe it? — I was going to be a preacher! — I, poor Slim Jim that nobody cares for, now. But I wanted to get rich, and I came to Gold City. I learned to play cards, and — well, here I am. No help for me — Slim Jim's lost this world and his soul, too. But you're on the right track, and, if when you die and go up there where those things shine," — and he pointed through the pines to the starlit sky — "you meet a little, sweet old lady with white hair and a gray dress knitting a pair of socks, tell her that her Jamie never forgot her and would give the best hand he ever had to feel her kiss once more and hear her say good-night. Tell her — listen, boy! — tell her it was the cards that ruined Jamie, but he's her Jamie still." And with tears on his face and in his voice, the tall, pale wreck of manhood hurried off in the darkness, leaving Job alone in the gloom.

It was late that night when Job said his prayer by his bed at home, but he made it long enough to put in one plea for Slim Jim.

CHAPTER X.

THE COVE MINE.

IT IS six miles from Pine Tree Ranch to the Cove Mine. You go over Lookout Point, from where El Capitan and the outline of the Yosemite can be easily seen on a clear day, down along the winding upper ridge of the Gulch, up again over the divide near Deer Spring and down along the zigzag trail on the steep side of Big Bear Mountain, then down to the very waters of the south fork of the Merced; just six miles to where, in the depth of the cañon, lies Wright's Cove Mine. In all the far-famed Sierras there can be no more picturesque spot. If one will take the trouble to climb the almost perpendicular ridge that rises two thousand feet behind the old tumbledown buildings, long, low cook-houses and superintendent's vine-covered cottage, along that narrow, half-destroyed trail that follows the rusty tracks and cogs and cable of an old railroad, up to the first and then on further to the second tunnel, where a few deserted ore-cars stand waiting the trains that never come, on still higher to the narrow ridge that separates the south fork from the north fork of the Merced River, he is rewarded with a view worth a long trip to see.

Let him stand there at sunset in the early spring and he has seen a view worthy of the land of the Jung Frau and Mt. Blanc. All around, the white-topped peaks of the high Sierras; far away, the snow banner waving over the Yosemite; to the left of him, far below, like a river of gold, sending up hither a faint murmur as it rushes over giant boulders and innumerable cataracts, the North Fork, hurrying from that ice-bound gorge which is the wonder of the Sierras; to the right, on the other side, dancing down from the far-off Big Trees, threading the tangled jungles of the Gulch, coming out through the dark green forest like a rim of molten silver, roaring down past the quaint little mining settlement, which looks half hid in partly-melted snow banks like some Swiss village, comes the south fork of the river, disappearing behind the mountain on which one stands.

The rushing stream, whose music is like some far-off echo; the strange deserted village; the narrow line of dark rails up the mountain-side through the snow; the gloomy, cavernous tunnels; the setting sun in the west gilding all with its transfiguring touch — these give a scene worthy the brush of a master-artist, who has never yet found his way over the Pine Mountain trail to the South Fork and Wright's Cove Mine.

It was just such a day in spring as this, as Job came whistling down the trail, gun in hand, looking for deer-tracks, that he thought he heard the report of a gun up in the second tunnel. He had often been there before; had climbed the trail and the cog railroad, played around and over the deserted buildings, and gone swimming off the iron bridge where the torrent was deepest. Once he and Dolph Swartz, a neighbor boy, had slept all night in the tool-house shed, waiting for game, and had seen only what Dolph was sure was a ghost — so sure that he hurried Job home at daybreak with a vow that he would never stay at Wright's Cove another night.

Job knew the place well, yet on this spring day he stopped and looked mystified. There it was again! Who could be in the second tunnel with a gun? Was it the spirit of some poor forty-niner come back again? He doubled his speed, slid down through the mud and slush, grasped a sapling and leaped down the short cut, ran up the bank and rocky sides of the roaring torrent, walked carefully over the slippery iron rails of the old rusty bridge, and made his way up the steep Tunnel Trail.

Soon he was close to the tunnel, so far up that the river's noise was lost behind him. He stopped and listened. Not a sound. Then clean and strong the ring of a gun, and a dull echo in the dim cavern!

All kinds of thoughts rushed through Job's head. He was not a superstitious boy, yet this was enough to make anybody feel queer — all alone in that deserted wilderness, with the echo of a gun coming out of the lonely mine, unworked for years and into which no human footstep had penetrated since the day that old Wright shot himself in the tunnel when he found that the mine which had paid big at first and into which he had put all his income, was a failure. Job had heard the boys tell that Indian Bill, the trapper, said he had seen the old fellow's skeleton marching up and down with gun in hand, two hundred feet down the tunnel, defending it against all intruders. Perhaps that was the ghost now! Would he dare to go? His flesh crept at the thought. He wished Shot was with him, or at least some living thing. Again he heard the report. His courage rose. He would face the thing, whatever it was.

Creeping up slowly and noiselessly, he reached the entrance to the tunnel and looked in. All was as dark as the grave. A cold draft rushed out over him. He could hear the drip, drip, of water from the roof. At first he thought he saw something moving in the distance, then he was not sure. He decided he would turn back; then curiosity was too much for him; he began to whistle and walked boldly into the darkness.

followed the rotten ties, when, lo! he saw a flash of light, heard a thundering report, and, involuntarily giving a yell, started to run, when a familiar voice shouted:

"Job, Job, come here!"

He turned, and there loomed up before him, to his utter amazement, the form of Andrew Malden.

The old man was evidently disconcerted and angry at being found, while the boy was utterly dumfounded.

"Wait a minute, Job; I'll go home with you," said Malden, as he took out the queerest charge Job had ever seen in a gun — a load of gold dust, which he carefully rammed down the barrel, then, bidding Job look out, fired into the rock.

"Why, what are you doing that for?" stammered the boy.

"Oh, salting the mine, just so it will keep," laughed Andrew Malden — a strange, hoarse laugh. "But mind, Job, nobody needs to know I did it. The mine will keep better if they don't."

As they passed out, Job noticed that the wall of the mine glittered in a way he had never seen before. What did it all mean? He dared ask no more questions of Andrew Malden. Almost in silence they climbed down the old trail, edged across the bridge, and strode with a steady pace up the long six miles over the Point to their home.

"What's 'salting a mine,' Tony?" asked Job of the black hostler one day a week after.

"Doan' know, Marse Job, unless it's doctoring the critter so you can make somebody believe it's worth a million, when it ain't worth a rabbit's hind foot. Tony's up to better bizness than salting mines."

"Who owns the Cove Mine, Tony?"

"Why, Marse Malden, I 'spec," said the surprised negro.

That evening Job looked at his guardian with a queer feeling as they sat down to supper, and that night he heard gun-shots in his dreams, and awoke with a shiver and waited for something to happen. He was conscious of impending trouble. Something was wrong.

It had been a hard winter in Grizzly county, and throughout the whole country, for that matter; a hard winter, following a fatal summer which closed with crops a failure on the plains, the stunted grain fields uncut, and the whole country paralyzed. The cities were full of men out of work. The demand for lumber had fallen off, and the Pine Mountain Mill was idle over half the time. The pessimism that filled the air had reached Andrew Malden, and he sat by the fire all winter nursing it. If he could sell the Cove Mine — but what was there to sell? And he gave it up as a futile project. Then there came news of a rich strike of gold in Shasta county, and a little later in the far south the deserts of the Mojave were found to glitter. A perfect epidemic of mining excitement followed. The most unthought-of places, the old deserted mines, were found to be bonanzas. Andy caught the fever. He tramped all over the Pine Tree Ranch prospecting, but gave up in despair. Then he thought once more of the Cove Mine. He made many a secret trip there. Then he ordered a box of gold dust from the Yellow Jacket and stole down to the Cove again and again, till discovered by Job.

In all those years of living for himself and to himself, Andrew Malden had tried to be square with the world. Business was business with him. He made no concessions to any man; pity and altruism were not in his vocabulary. Unconsciously to himself, he had grown to be a very hard man, and the heart within him found it difficult to make itself felt through the calloused surface of his life. But with it all Andrew Malden had been honest. His word was as good as his bond in all Grizzly county. No man questioned his statements. Everyone got a hundred cents on the dollar when Andrew Malden paid his debts.

But no man knew that in those days of the

hard spring the gray-haired pioneer was passing through one of the greatest temptations of his life. Men were buying up mines all about him, just at a glance; mines fully as worthless as the Cove Mine. Anyhow, who knew the Cove Mine was worthless? It had had a marvelous record in early days. A little capital spent might bring immense reward. The old man sat, again and again, alone on the front porch and turned it over in his mind. Then he would creep off down to the mine, and feel his way in the dark tunnel, looking for a new lead. He looked at the places he had salted, until he almost brought himself to believe them genuine. Nobody would know the difference, he argued. Job did not know what he was doing when he found him. He would take the risk; he might lose the ranch itself if he did not. And, coming home with the first stain of dishonesty on his soul, Andrew Malden astonished Job by ordering him to have Jack and Dave hitched up at three in the morning; he was going to drive to the plains and the railroad station, then take a train to the city, and would be back in a few days.

Ten days later, Jack and Dave and the carriage, all coated with slush and mud, drove up to the door, and Andrew Malden, with a strangely affable smile on his face, clambered stiffly out and introduced Job to Mr. Henry Devonshire, an Englishman traveling for his health and profit. With a gruff greeting the stranger said:

"We 'ad a dirty trip hup. The mud's no respecter h'of an H'english gentleman nor h'an American millionaire, don'cher know?" and the pompous Mr. Devonshire handed his hand-grip to Job, while he poked out his shoes for the gray-haired lackey to wipe, with an —

"'Ere, you, clean these feet, bloomin' quick!"

Job and Tony obeyed, but a significant look passed between them.

The next few days things went lively at the Pine Tree Ranch. Some of the mill men were ordered off to scour the mountains for deer, a new Chinese cook came up from Gold City, and the old man and the "H'english gentleman," as Tony called him with a contemptuous chuckle, mounted horses and went riding over the ranch and down to the mine. It took all the grace Job had to see the arrogant boor, with his two hundred and fifty avoirdupois, get Tony to help him mount Bess, and, poking her in the ribs, call out, "What a bloomin' 'orse! Cawn't h'it go!" and ride off toward Lookout Point.

It was astonishing, the politeness Andrew Malden assumed; how he overlooked all the gruffness of his guest and treated him like a prince. Job fairly stared in wonder. It capped the climax when one night — just as, tucked up snug in his bed, Job was dreaming of his last walk home from school with Jane — to feel a rude shake and to see Andrew Malden with excited face standing over him, saying:

"Jump, boy! Dress quick and saddle Bess and ride with all your might to Gold City and catch Joe before the stage leaves. Take this telegram, and tell him to send it as soon as he gets to the plains and Wheatland Depot! Here, up with you!"

It was not over fifteen minutes after that Job was galloping away on Bess' back in the cold, night air, over the muddy roads, stiffened somewhat in the frosty spring night, and lit only by the dim starlight. It was a wild ride, a ride that sent a chill to his very marrow; and if it had not been for his ever-present trust in God, it would have struck terror to his heart. It seemed as if it grew darker and darker. The clouds were creeping across the stars, the great trees hung like a drapery of gloom over the roadway. Faster and faster he rode. Now he soothed Bess as she shied at some suspicious rock that glistened with unmelted snow, or some crackle in the bushes that broke the stillness of the night air; then he urged her on till down the steep Frost Creek road she fairly flew.

It was at the dim hour of dawn, and out

of the gloom the world was creeping into view, when Job, with the white foam on Bess, and both heated and freezing himself, rode up to the door of the old brick Palace Hotel, where Joe, just mounting the box of the familiar ancient coach in which Job had once years ago traveled as a passenger, was about to snap his whip over the backs of four doubtful-looking horses which stood pawing the ground as if anxious to be stirring in such frosty air.

A hurried conversation, a white paper passed into Joe's hands, and the long whip snapped, four steeds made a desperate charge forward, an old woman in the coach, wrapped in three big shawls, bounded into air, and Job saw the stage vanish up the hill, with the horses settling down to the conventional snail's pace they had maintained these long years.

CHAPTER XI.

BATTLES WITH CONSCIENCE.

JOE evidently sent the telegram, for his stage next day brought up the long-looked-for load of "bigbugs" that set the whole town of Gold City wild to know why they were there. A perfect mob of street urchins, loafers, shop-men and bar-keepers who could spare a bit of time, lined up in front of the Palace Hotel and watched the plaid-coated, gray-capped visitors in short knickerbockers and golf stockings puff their pipes around the bar and call for "Porter and h'ale, 'alf and 'alf."

Interest reached its climax when, after supper, three buckboards, loaded with the guests heavy in more ways than one, started down toward Mormon Bar and the Pine Mountain road.

It was quite late when the loud barking of dogs announced their arrival at Pine Tree Ranch, and it was still later when Job crept up to the hay-loft over the stable to find a substitute for his cosy bed, which he had surrendered to another "H'english gentleman," with an emphasis on the la The boy was in a quandary to know all meant. He felt an inward sens gust. He disliked such people as th friends of the old man's. Then he bered that the good Book says, "Th love thy neighbor as thyself," and painfully conscious that they we neighbors now; so he breathed prayer that the Lord would ma love the unlovable, and after a t asleep.

It was the second day of the feas son and quail, if not milk and hon made the table groan in the big cent now changed into a dining-room. lor had been turned into a smoki and Job had seen, with indignat stirred his deepest soul, empty bee on his bedroom floor. A whole cava horsemen had gone down in the mc the Cove and come galloping back Job had been to the milk-house coming back past the side door in t of the evening; it was ajar and th of tobacco smoke rolled out. tempted to peer in. Around the dining-table the crowd of red-face were seated, with Andy at the he ing the host in an awkward sort of the table were spread a big map ar and ink.

"Well, Mr. Malden, this 'ere nugg from the mine, you say. Bloomir hain't h'it, fellows?" said a voice.

"Yes, gentlemen, I found that My son Job and I were prospecting, discovered it — the richest nugget ev in Grizzly county. Of course we k secret; didn't want a rush up here,' Malden.

"What a lie!" said Job to himself. the very nugget Mike Hannerry four Yellow Jacket! Where on earth d get it?"

"Come, Devonshire, let's buy 'er l get h'out of this bloomin' country. to get back to the club. The boat

tralia sails Saturday," spoke up another voice.

"But now I want to ask the mon a thing," said a little shrewd-faced Scotchman. "Is he sure the thing down the hollow isn't salted? I got one salted mine in the colonies, and — "

"Salted!" said Andy, with an unnoticed flush on his face. "Salted! Do you suppose, gentlemen, I would bring you here to sell you a salted mine? You can ask anybody back in the city if my credit isn't first-class."

"Oh, mon," said a tall Highlander, "oh, mon, the feller's crazy. Salted — humph! We saw the gold with our own eyes. I say take the mine. I'll take a thousand shares at a pound. How much is the deal, did the mon say?"

"H'an 'undred thousand pounds. Cheap, I think," answered Devonshire.

"H'it's a go. We'll 'ave the stuff h'at the h'inn down h'in — what's the name of that town?" said the tall one.

"Gold City, sir, Gold City!" spoke up the excited host.

"Well, Gold City — that's the spot. We'll pay the cash there. My banker'll come h'in there to-night h'in the stage."

And as Job crept away, he heard them planning, between drinks, the future of the "Anglo-American Gold Mining Syndicate," with main office in London and place of operation in Grizzly county, State of California, the United States of America.

Job did not sleep that night. All through the dark hours he tossed on his straw bed over the stable. Andrew Malden was going to sell the Cove Mine for five hundred thousand dollars — and it was not worth one cent! It was an outrageous fraud. The boy felt like going and telling those capitalists. He felt a sense of personal guilt. Yet he almost hated those men. What difference if they were cheated? — they would never miss it; they deserved it. How much Uncle Andy needed the money! And it would be his own some day.

That thought touched Job's conscience to the center. He was a partner in the crime! He half rose in bed, resolving that he would face the crowd and tell all — how he had stood by and seen the old man salt the mine. Then he hesitated. What was it to him? If he told, it would ruin Andy. What business had he with it, anyhow? But all night long the wind whistled in through the cracks, "Thou shalt not steal," and Job tossed in agony of soul, wishing he had never climbed down the Pine Mountain trail to the Cove on that spring day when Andrew Malden salted the mine.

The sun was well up the next morning when the procession of buckboards was ready to start for Gold City. Andrew Malden and the shrewd fellow had gone an hour before, the rest were off, and only the boorish Devonshire was left to ride down with Tony. Job stood, with heart palpitating and conscience goading him, down by the big pasture gate to let them through. All his peace of mind was gone. A few moments and the crime would be carried out to its end, and he would be equally guilty with the avaricious old man who was the nearest one he had in all the world.

Tony and the last man, the obnoxious Devonshire, were coming. How Job hated to tell him, of all men! The hot flashes came and went on his cheek; he turned away; he bit his lip; he would let it go — lose his religion and go to the bad with Andy Malden. Then the old camp-meeting days came back to him. He heard again Slim Jim's words in the dark behind the church that Christmas night; he remembered his vows to God and the church.

The horse and the buckboard had passed through the gate; the Englishman had thrown him a dollar; he was trembling from head to foot. He offered a quick prayer, then hurried after them, halted Tony, and, looking up into the red face of his companion, said:

"Sir, the mine is salted; I saw the old man do it — it's salted sure!"

The load was gone, the consciousness of

hfulness filled his soul. That day he
yed with Shot and sang about his work.

The dusky twilight had come, when Job
ard the stern voice of Andrew Malden
itside, as, with an oath, he threw the reins
) Hans. The boy rose to meet him as he
eard his step on the porch. The door
)pened, and Job saw a white face and
flashing eyes, the very incarnation of wrath.

"You pious fraud! What made you tell those men the mine was salted!" hissed the old man.

"Uncle, I am sorry, but I couldn't help it. I knew it — I had to tell the truth," stammered Job.

"Couldn't help it, you sneak! You owe all you are to me. I guess I am more to you than all your religion!"

"Uncle, I am sorry to hurt you, but I could do no less and please God. And God is first in my life."

"First, is he? Then go to him, and let him feed you and clothe you, you ungrateful wretch!" And with the words the angry man struck Job such a blow that he went reeling over, a dead-weight, on the floor.

It was midnight when Tony, passing the door, heard the old man moan. Peering in at the window, he saw him on his knees beside Job, who, with white face and closed eyes, lay on a lounge near the door. Tony stole away to whisper to Hans:

"Guess the old man's made way with the kid! Let's lay low!"

What a night that was for Andrew Malden! Two minutes after he had struck the blow, all the wrath which had gathered strength on that long mountain ride was gone. The blow struck open the door of his heart; he saw that the boy was right and he was wrong. That blanched face, those closed eyes — how they pierced him through and through! He loved that boy more than all the mines and gold and ranches in the world. The depth of his iniquity came over him. He hated himself, he hated the Cove Mine; but that stalwart lad lying there — how he loved him! All the ... thirty years went out to him. "Job! Job! he cried. "Look at me! Tell me you forgive me!"

He dashed water in the boy's face. He felt of his heart — he could hardly feel it beat. Was he dead? Dead! — the only one he cared for? Dead! — the poor motherless boy he had brought home one moonlight night long ago, and promised that he would be both father and mother to him? Dead! — aye, dead by his hand! And for what? For telling the truth; for being honest and manly; for saving him from holding in his grasp the ill-gotten gain that always curses a man.

The hot tears came, the first in years. Andrew Malden knelt by the bedside and groaned. And then he thought of Job's God and of the Christ he talked about: thought of the little Testament he cherished. He would call on Him, he would beg Him to spare Job. He knelt near the lad; he started to say, "Oh, God, spare my boy! spare my boy!" when a sense of his wickedness, his hard heart, his selfish life, his sin, came over him; and instead he cried from the depths of his soul, "God have mercy on me a sinner!"

The daylight was struggling through the shutters when Job turned and opened his eyes, to see an anxious face look into his own and to hear a familiar voice out of which had gone all anger, say:

"Oh, Job, my boy, I knew He'd hear me, I prayed so long! Job, God has forgiven me! Won't you? Oh, tell me you will! I am a different man! I read it in the Book while you lay here so still: 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' And Job, it's true!"

The fever stayed with Job many a day after that, and it was June before the natural color came back into his white cheeks. But the old ranch seemed like a new place to him; and when one morning Mr. Malden read at family devotions, "All things work together for good to them that love God

:e down in the prayer he tried to
ınd rushed out of doors to hide the
joy that choked him, while he heard
nging as he went about his toil:

dar's glory, yes, dar is glory,
h, dar is glory in my soul!
:e I touched de hem of His garment,
h, dar is glory in my soul."

CHAPTER XII

SQUIRE PERKINS.

ALL the queer families in the moun-
ıins, not one, surely, equalled that
f Squire Perkins, a real down-east
, whose house was not more than a
est of Malden's Mill, on the Frost
road. A little weazened old man,
hile he had always been staunch to
tical creed, and had been Republican
sor of the town ever since people
:member, yet had drifted religiously
was now a typical Spiritualist. The
r boys who used to go past his house
s and see him with the "Truth
' in his hands, wandering among the
nd gazing blankly into space, often
m for a genuine ghost.

/ife was quite unlike him. She was
ı a house-boat on the Pearl River
ınton, and, with hair plaited down
:head and cheeks, slanting eyes and
shoes and a silk robe, had landed
Francisco when it was still a hetero-
ı trading-post, and had come up with
.ers to prattle "pigeon English," and
s it turned out, for Squire Perkins.
ıther women came — Americans from
tes — the old man married her. Long
ıe had adopted American ways and
ned the Methodist church, and not
the neighbors, who always sent for
Perkins' wife in time of trouble,
: less of her because she was a Chi-
ɔman.

ɔng, white cottage, with its vine-cov-
ered walls, its "hen-and-chicken" bordered walks, and its old gnarled apple tree hugging the left side next to the stone chimney, became a still queerer place when Widow Smith, a tall, straight, firm, black-eyed, dark-skinned Indian woman, the descendant of a long line of natives of these hills, but withal a refined, womanly old lady, came to board with Squire Perkins and his wife. Widow Smith was a Presbyterian of the straitest sort. The Squire's was surely a home of many races and many creeds.

It was at this house that one Tuesday evening the Methodist class met, and Andy Malden came and confessed Christ, and all Grizzly county was startled thereby. It was here that Job often rode up on Bess beside the kitchen window where Aunty Perkins was making rice cakes, and heard her say: "Job, heap good, allee samee angel cake. Have some. Melican boy have no mother. Old Chinawoman, she take care of him."

And she kept her word. She won the boy's heart, till he found himself more than once going with his troubles down to Aunty Perkins', who always ended her motherly advice with, "Be heap good, Job, heap good. The Lord lub the motherless boy. 'He will never fail nor forslake thee.'"

It was here that Jane also stole with her heart burdens to the strange, great-hearted woman who mothered the whole county. It was here she was going one hot July afternoon, as, with blackberry pail on her arm, she walked slowly down Sugar Pine Hill, thinking of the day when she had first met Job on that very road. Her black hair was smoothly braided down her back, she wore a light muslin dress tied with a red sash, low shoes took the place of the tan and dust of other days, a neat starched sunbonnet enfolded her face now showing traces of womanhood near at hand. As she turned the bend of the road, Job stood there leaning on the fence with a far-away look. It was he who was startled this time, as he dropped his elbows and hastened to lift his

faded sombrero. It was the most natural thing in the world for him to walk slowly down the lane with her toward the Mill Road. The July sun was hot, so they kept on the shady side of the way.

Job thought enough of the girl to make him reserved. He wanted to tell her that she was first in all his prayers, and that up in his room he had the plans drawn for a cabin over on the corner of the ranch where she should stand in the doorway and look for his coming. Thrice he started to open his heart, then he shrank back abashed; talked of the cows and how the calves grew; told her Bess was lame — couldn't ride her this week; said that was a pretty fine sermon the parson preached last Sunday — and turned homeward; while Jane looked after him with wondering eyes and felt a great ache in her heart as she thought:

"It's no use; he don't care for me!"

She had barely passed the mill and the whiz of its machinery lulled into a murmur that mingled with the brook along the well-shaded road, when she heard the clatter of horse's hoofs, and, mounted on an old white nag, Dan rode up to her side with:

"Hello, Jane! Get on and ride!"

Jane blushed. A year ago she would have done it; why not now, even if she was big? No one would see her. Dan was awfully good to ask her; Job wouldn't do it. So up she climbed on the saddle behind him, and Dan walked the horse as they chatted away in the most easy fashion.

She was longing to talk of religion to Dan; she felt he needed it. But one thing was sure — Dan was sober nowadays; he had actually improved. He was trying now to talk of love; for he was really beginning to feel that, not only because he had made a bet to do so and defeat Job, but because he did care, he should some day claim Jane Reed as his own. Neither succeeded in getting the conversation just where they wanted it before Squire Perkins' apple orchard came into view, and Dan was obliged to halt his old nag by the horse-block built out from the white fen assist Jane to alight.

She actually stood there till Aunt kins called: "Gal lost one ting. Co in. All gone." At which Jane blush went in, though all Mrs. Perkins' could not drive out of her mind the loved and the Dan whom she wish could love. How comely she looked stood in the doorway at twilight! A might have been proud of her.

CHAPTER XIII.

SCHOOL.

THE next fall was Job's last t school. He felt awkward and place, for most of the boys country round left at sixteen, just were tangled up in fractions and Now he was close to the twenties, only big boy left in the Frost Creek whose white walls peeped out thr grove of live-oaks where the creek merrily over the rocks.

Yet with a pluck that had always terized him, Job stuck to his books among the crowd of little youngste automatically recited the multip table when the teacher was lookin threw paper wads when she was not was there, copying minutely in dre manner after Miss Bright, the new whom she greatly admired. Job found pleasant to still walk home with Ja talk of algebra, class meeting, and they must soon take to the Yosemite jects which were mutually interestin somehow the wild, natural freed former days was missing. Both wer fully conscious of their awkward a the fact that they were no longer chi

Charlie Lewis sat next to Job, a w little fellow, whose large eyes looked lessly at his tall next neighbor, wh secretly worshiped, partly becau

shielded him from the rough bullies, and partly because he had taken a fancy to the little lad and took him along when he went up to the mountains or down to Perkins Hollow swimming. A crowd of dark-eyed Mexicans and one small Chinese boy filled the right corner, while over on the left were the Dixon children and little Helen Day. Helen was a new arrival, a prim Miss of six, who used to live on the plains, where her father was section-hand on the railroad; which accounted, perhaps, for the fact that the time when Father Lane, the old preacher from Merritt's Camp, called and they sang, "Blest be the tie that binds," and the teacher asked Helen what ties were meant, she promptly answered, "Railroad ties, ma'am."

As pretty as a picture, always dressed in fine white, with a flower at her throat as a brooch, and no end of wild ones on her desk, Miss Bright sat at the head of the school room through the day, laughing merrily now over the mistakes of some awkward boy, now singing kindergarten songs with a class of wee tots, and then, after the smaller ones were dismissed, holding Jane and Job spellbound as they stood by her desk and heard her talk of her college days and 'Frisco, lovely 'Frisco, and the glories of entomology, and the delights of philosophy — names which Job knew must mean something grand. He began to wish that Jane looked like her and talked like her and had lived in 'Frisco. He began to wonder who it was that Miss Bright wrote letters to every day, and who wrote those Dan Dean used to leave at the school-house for her postmarked "New York." His fears were relieved, though, when he heard her laugh merrily one day when inquisitive Maggie Dean asked: "What man writes to you all the time, Miss Bright?" and reply, "My brother, of course, Maggie. But little girls shouldn't ask too many questions."

They used to have morning prayers when the other teacher was here, but Miss Bright said that prayer was only the expression of our longings and we did not need to pray aloud, and she thought God knew enough to look after us without bothering him about it every day. Job was shocked at first, then he thought perhaps Miss Bright was right, she was so nice and knew so much. She boarded at Jeremiah Robinson's, who lived on the Frost Creek road. More than once Job found himself going there at her invitation, ostensibly to study Latin and literature, which were not in the regular curriculum. He did not care much for the studies — he found it hard to get far beyond "Amo, amas, amat," and as for Chaucer and his glittering knights and fair ladies, he detested them; but those moments after the lessons, when Miss Bright chattered away about the beauties of evolution and the loveliness of protoplasm and the immanence of Deity in all nature — Job fairly doted on them.

Sometimes she accepted his invitation for an evening ramble. He felt proud to have people see him with her. He would have liked to ask her to the class-meeting at Squire Perkins', but he was afraid to; she would think it beneath her to go among those country folks. And then, what would she think of Widow Green if she got one of her crying-spells? or lame Tim, who was a little daft, but who loved to come to class-meeting and said always, "Tim's no good; he ain't much; but Jesus loves him. Sing, brethren, 'I am so glad that Jesus loves me.'" So Job never invited her. In fact, he did not like to tell her he went; and, for fear she would know it, he stayed away two weeks when she asked him to walk with her those moonlight nights.

Miss Bright was so good, he thought; yet there was much he could not understand. She never went to church. She said it was too far, and besides she thought it more helpful to worship amid the grandeur of nature, reading the lofty thoughts of the poets. And after that Job thought the preacher at Gold City was a little old fogyish.

Dan Dean was not slow to observe the unconscious drifting of Job away from the church and toward the schoolma'am. Jane did not notice it till Dan hinted to her that the only reason Job had cared for the church was because she went there, and now that Miss Bright had come he had dropped her and the church both. Which was so near the truth that Jane began to feel strange when Job was near, and to do what she had never dreamed of doing before with a single human being — she began to doubt the occasional kind words he now gave her, and all he had ever uttered. With the impulse of a wounded heart, she turned to Dan. Yet try the best she could, she could never feel the same toward him. She pitied Dan; a philanthropic feeling animated her as she thought of him. She would do anything to make a man of him — marry him, even, if necessary; but to think of surrendering her life and very being to him, following him down the tortuous path of life, "For better or for worse, for richer or poorer," to have him as her ideal of manhood — that thought repelled her. Often she found herself standing behind a tree on the way home from school, waiting to catch one glimpse of Job as he sauntered by with Miss Bright's cloak on his arm and its owner chattering at his side. She was angry to think she did it; she ran home by the short cut through the woods, slammed the cabin door behind her, threw herself on the bed and had a good cry, arose and wiped the tears away, and vowed she would marry Dan if he asked her.

Job unconsciously walked into the meshes that fate seemed to have thrown around him. More and more he transferred the admiration of his heart to the stately, proud, talented girl of the world, who found him a convenient escort and companion in the mountain country where friends that suited her were scarce. Job was blind; he adored her. Later and later, daily, was his return from school. The little Testament grew dusty on the box-table in his bedroom, his morning prayers sounded strangely alike, and even Andy Malden wondered at the coldness of the lad's devotion at family worship. He went to church, but seldom to class-meeting. He devoured a book Miss Bright had loaned him, on "The World's Saviors — Buddha, Mohammed, Christ," — in which he found his Master placed on a level with other great souls. He asked her the next day if she did not think Christ was divine, and marveled at her learned reply that "All nature is divine. Matter and men are but the manifestations of divinity, and the Galilean Teacher was undoubtedly a wonderful character of his day."

One night, as he left her, she loaned him a French novel full of skepticism and scorn of virtue and morality. He was tempted to throw it in the fire, but it was hers. He read it and rather liked it. He began to think he had been too narrow; he wished he could get out and see the world, the great world of thinking people where Miss Bright lived. The poison was in his soul. How commonplace the sermon sounded the next Sunday on "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified"! How narrow Paul must have been! It was the Sunday night before Christmas. The fall term had ended, and the schoolma'am was going home; no more school till spring. A year before Job had stood in the great congregation and taken the solemn vow to be loyal forever to Christ and his church; to-night the Christmas service went on without him. Tony, who was there and who half suspected something was wrong, yet did not like to have anyone else think so, said to those who asked him:

"Yes, Marse Job's sick; dassen't come out."

But Job was not sick, as Tony thought. He was in the Robinson parlor, sitting with Miss Bright before the flickering log fire, which dimly lit the long, low room with its rag carpet and old-fashioned furniture. They were talking over their friendship, and she was flattering him upon his superiority

to those country greenhorns who lived up here; she always knew he had city blood in him. Job was acting sillier than anybody would have dreamed Job Malden could act, in his evident pride at her flattery and the strange feelings which drew him to her. She laughed at his attempts to compliment her, and, on his departure, followed him to the door and said how heart-broken she was to leave the mountains and him.

Job went home in raptures, and lay awake all night planning how to get away from the mountains and the rude people who lived there, and down into the city somewhere — anywhere where Fanny Bright lived.

All that week he wandered about as if lost, cross and good for nothing at work. His city idol had gone home.

It was two days after Christmas that Job tore the wrapper off a 'Frisco paper and sat down to read, when, glancing over the columns, his eyes met the following:

"Unity Church made a brilliant scene on Christmas night at the wedding of Miss Frances Evelyn Bright, a charming young society lady, to Walter Graham Davis, the well-known actor. Miss Bright had just returned from Grizzly county, where she has been for her health, so her friends made the reception that followed one in a double sense."

It was a haggard, red-eyed young fellow who crept down the stairs after dusk, stole out to the stable, and saddled Bess. All night he rode up and down the mountain roads. He hated the ground Miss Bright had walked over, hated the house she had lived in, hated the school, vowed he'd never enter it again, hated himself. She was gone, Jane was gone — long since he had let Dan have her to himself — his church was gone, all his peace of soul, all his religion, was gone. He would ride up on Lookout Point and plunge over into the Gulch to death and eternity, he and Bess together. Who cared? They were all alike — all were heartless. Poor boy! he was learning a lesson that many a one has learned — a bitter lesson — and all the forces of evil seemed to fight for his soul that dark night as he climbed Lookout Point on Bess.

He had reached the top when the moon came up over El Capitan and drove away the gloom, lighting up the white-topped peaks and the dark, black ravine. Somehow, he thought of his mother. There had been one good woman in the world, after all. He hesitated, then turned slowly down the hill and toward home.

CHAPTER XIV.

YANKEE SAM.

IT WAS a wild March night when Job Malden found his way back to God. No one could ever forget that night. The storm tore over the mountains till the great forests fairly creaked and groaned beneath the mad sweep of the wind.

At dusk that afternoon a rap startled Job as he sat by the fire watching the logs crackle and thinking of by-gone days, while the rain poured without. He opened the door, and saw Mike Hennessy, dripping wet and with cap in hand.

"Shure, Mr. Job, the top of the evenin' to yez. But Mr. Schwarzwalder, the hotel keeper at the town, wants ye, he says, to bring the Holy Book;" at which Mike reverently crossed himself. "A man is dyin' and wants yez;" and the good-natured Irishman was gone in an instant, leaving Job in blank amazement.

Ride that awful night to Gold City — take the Bible — man dying. What could it mean? But the lad's better nature conquered, and, the Bible snug in his pocket, he and Bess were soon daring the storm, bound for Gold City.

It was a wild night. Wet to the skin, Job rode up to the Palace Hotel, late, very late, where he found a group of solemn-faced men waiting for him.

"Change your clothes, Job," said the hotel-keeper; "here's a dry suit. Hurry

now! Yankee Sam is dying upstairs, and he won't have no one but you; says you're his preacher, and he wants to hear you read out of some book."

Job grew white. Yankee Sam dying, and he to hear his last confession, he the priest to shrive him, he the preacher to console him! The boy lifted up his first true prayer for months, and followed the man

"Listen, Job; I want to tell you."

upstairs to a low garret room, where the door closed behind him and left him alone with a weak old man lying on a low bed, his eyes shining in the dim candle-light with an unnatural glare.

"Oh, Job, I'm mightly glad you've come to help an old man die! Yes, I am dying, Job; the old man's near the end. I'll no more hang around the Miners' Home and beg a drink from the stranger. Curse the rum, Job! It's brought me here where you c[illegible]nd me, a good-for-nothing, dying without m[illegible]riend in the world — yes, one friend, Job; her [illegible]e my friend, ain't you?"

her. [illegible] frightened and touched to the heart, from s[illegible]assent.

dusty on [illegible]ight so, Job. I take stock in you. morning p[illegible] you came here, a blue-eyed, lonely boy, I took you into my heart — for Yankee Sam's got a heart; and I felt so proud of you that night when you said, 'I renounce the devil and all his works,' and I wished I could have stood by you and said it, too. But Job, my boy, the devil has a big mortgage on Yankee Sam, and he's foreclosing it to-night, and —"

The tempest shook the building, and Job lost the next words as the old man rose on his elbow, then sank back exhausted. The wind died down, and Job tried to comfort him with some words that sounded weak and hollow to himself. But the dying man roused again, and, raising his trembling hand, said:

"Wait, Job. Get the Book. See if it has anything in it for me."

Job opened to those beautiful words in Isaiah: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The old man bent his ear to listen. "Job, let's see it. Is it in there — 'red like crimson, white as wool'? Oh, no, my sins are too red for that! Listen, Job, I want to tell you. I am dying a poor lost sinner, but I was not always a street loafer, kicked and cuffed by the world. Hear me, my boy! Would you believe that I was once a mother's blue-eyed boy in old New Hampshire? Oh, such a mother! She's up where the angels are now. I can feel the soft touch of her hands that smoothed my head when I was a boy. Oh, I wish she was here to-night! But — Job, Job, I killed her! — I did! I came home with the liquor in me and she fell in a faint, and they said

afterward that she never came to. Oh, Job, I killed her, and I didn't care! I went to the city. I found a wife, a sweet-faced little woman; she married me for better or for worse; and Job, it was worse — God have mercy on me!"

The old man gasped and then went on. "The babies came, and I was so proud of them! Then the fever broke out. I went to get medicine when she and the little ones were so sick, and I got on a spree — I don't remember — but when I came to, they showed me their graves in the potter's field; they said the medicine might have saved them. Oh, Job, I can't think! It makes me wild to think!"

The storm burst again in its fury, and the old man's voice was silenced. Then came a lull, and he went on, "Job, 'sins as scarlet,' — ain't they scarlet? Well, I came West, got in the mines, went from bad to worse and now, Job, I'm dying! And who cares?"

"God cares," said Job. "Listen: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

"Oh, Job, does that mean me? — poor old Yankee Sam!" said the dying man.

Again Job read the words, and once again told as best he could the story of the Father's love and of Jesus, who came to save from sin; came to save poor lost sinners.

The old man hung on every word. "Say it again, Job, say it again! God loves poor Yankee Sam! Say it again!"

Over and over Job said the words, then he sang soft and low:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,"

while the tempest raged without.

"Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on thee."

Just then Yankee Sam stopped him. "Job, that's me, that's me! Pray, Job! I am going fast!"

Oh, how Job prayed! Prayed till he felt God close by that dying bed.

"'As scarlet' — yet — 'white — as snow.' Is that it, Job?" whispered Sam. "Oh, yes, that's it! They're gone, Job — the devil's lost his mortgage. Let me pray, Job. It's the prayer mother said for me when I was a little boy; it's the prayer Andy Malden said at his lad's grave; it's my prayer now:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
And if—if—"

The low, quavering voice ceased, a smile came over the white face, the wind was hushed without, the stars struggled through the clouds. Yankee Sam was dead, and peace had come back into Job Malden's soul.

CHAPTER XV.

THE YELLOW JACKET MINE.

THE next fall Mr. Malden got Job the place of assistant cashier at the Yellow Jacket Mine. His staunch character, his local fame as a student at the Frost Creek school, and his general manly bearing, added to Mr. Malden's influence in the county, won him the place when the former assistant left for the East. Andrew Malden thought it would be a good experience for a young man like Job, and perhaps would open the way to something better than a lumber mill and a timber and stock ranch.

The Yellow Jacket Mine was one of the oldest and most famous in the whole country. It was the very day they sighted the ship off Telegraph Hill that brought the news into 'Frisco Bay that California was admitted as a State, that gold was discovered in Yellow Jacket Creek, where, when the rush came some days later, the men said

they didn't know which was most plenty — yellow jackets in the air, or yellow jackets in the gravel bed of the creek as it lay dry and bare in the summer sun.

At last the creek bed had been washed over and over till the red-shirted miners could find not one nugget more, and the Yellow Jacket was deserted. Then one day a poor stranded fellow, who came in too late to make enough to get out, was digging a well, and found quartz down deep and a streak of gold in it. That was the beginning of the real fame of the Yellow Jacket. A company bought it up, machinery was put in, and now, in Job Malden's day, the stamp mills and deep tunnels of the mine kept five hundred men busy in shifts that never ceased night or day.

Job never forgot the first day he went there as assistant cashier. He had seen it all before, but when one is a sort of "partner" in a firm, it looks different to one. And so it did to Job, as, after a long ride with Tony in the buckboard down the Frost Creek road, up past Mike Hennessy's, down and up and across Rattlesnake Gulch, and over the heavily timbered mountain, a bend in the road brought him in full view of the Yellow Jacket on the bare hillside opposite. The tall smoke-stacks belching forth their black clouds; the big buildings about them; the great heap of waste stuff at the right; the dump-cars running out and back; the miners' shanties bare and brown on the left, running up the hillside, hugging the break-neck steeps; the handsome house on the south which he knew must be the superintendent's home; the tall, ungainly brick structure of the company's store in the heart of things; the far-off thump, thump, and the ceaseless roar of the machinery — all this made a deep impression on Job.

For a year, at least, he was to live amid this scene. What a strange life it was for Job there at the Yellow Jacket! There, in sight of the eternal hills; there, only five miles, in an air-line, from the quiet ranch, from Bess, the great barns, the world of nature, and home — and yet it seemed five thousand miles away to him. Shut in that little office behind the iron bars, bending over the great books sometimes far into the night, looking out each pay-day through a little arched window on grimy faces and rough-bearded men who held out toil-worn hands to receive the week's earnings which long before another week would find their way into some saloon-keeper's till or gambler's pocket.

The only out-door world he saw was between the rear door of the office and the long, low boarding-house where the foremen and clerks lived. One corner of the great room upstairs, where a hard bed ran up against the roof, and one place at the long, oilcloth-covered table, he had the privilege to call his own for the modest sum of a gold piece a week. He had every other Sunday to himself by the extreme favor of the "boss," on whose own calendar Sunday never came, and who could not see why it should on any one's else.

At first, Job left the narrow, well-worn streets, always, it seemed to him, crowded with an endless procession of dirty, pale-faced, muscular, rough men going to and from shifts; left them far behind and tramped over to the Frost Creek school, redolent with peculiar memories, to the afternoon service. But when the snows came and winter set in, he dared not take the long tramps, but hugged the fire at his boarding-house, read his little Testament, and tried in vain to find one spot out of hearing of the noise of tramping feet, the roar of the stamp-mill, and the hoarse laughter and rude stories and language of the men ever coming and going.

He could never get away from the sound, and only in an old, abandoned shaft back of the office could he crawl down out of sight to pray. But Job never forgot to pray in those days. He was learning, as never before, what it is to be in the world and yet not of it; in its turmoil and din, sharing its work, mingling with its strange humanity,

and yet living in the atmosphere of prayer and high thinking; in a world of impurity, yet living a pure life; a world of evil words, and yet never even thinking them; in the world, and yet not of it.

Job Malden was fast growing into manhood. It was in those long winter days at the Yellow Jacket that the heart came back to him and somehow he found himself thinking of Jane Reed. The bitter memory of the folly of those days last winter at the Frost Creek school still haunted him, and yet the hardness had gone out of his soul. He had no right to think of Jane, he felt; he had forfeited all claim to her affection. But somehow the old love came back, and he longed to go to her and be forgiven. What a true girl she was! — a child of the mountains. Little she knew of the city and its guile, of society and its masks. How could he ever have thought her common or beneath him! She towered up in his thought like the pines of her native mountains, as fresh and natural and wild as they. He would not have her different. She was far above him. Faith, and church, and simple homely virtues, and all that is holy, were linked in Job's mind with the memory of artless, honest, great-hearted Jane that came back to him in the lonely hours at the mine.

One day he started back at seeing a strangely familiar face present itself at the pay window.

"Oh, yer needn't be scart, Job, because yer old pard's got a job in the Yellow Jacket as well as yer." It was Dan's voice. "Must be mighty nice in there handin' out the boodle to us poor, hard-worked laborers; mighty easy to tuck a little of it in yer pocket now and then."

Job colored, and replied that it was not his money, and he only took his pay like the men.

"Mighty good yet, ain't yer, Job; playin' the pious dodge still. Thought perhaps the way that schoolma'am jilted yer would take the big-head out of yer. Well, I don't make any pretense of bein' pious; don't need to, as I can see — get all I want without it. Every gal in town wants me, and a fine one that came near gettin' fooled on yer likes me purty well. In fact, that's what's brought me over to the mine — got to get a little stuff to fix up the house for her. When a fellow brings a wife home, he wants the old place lookin' slick. Good-day, Job. See yer again."

Job made no reply, but a lump came into his throat. He stood and stared, and then turned in an absent-minded way and bent his head over the great ledger, though he seemed not to care which page opened. Jane to marry Dan! Was that what he had meant? Had it come to that? Once Job had not cared, but now the thought made him wild. Could it be true? Jane to marry Dan Dean! Better she were dead. Job felt he could see her carried to the grave with less sorrow than to see her Dan's wife.

It was very strange how Job came to be the preacher at the Yellow Jacket mine. Not that he ever put on clerical garb or deserted the office or was anything more than a plain, every-day Christian. Yet there came a time when in the eyes of those rough miners, with hearts far more tender than one would think from their exterior — and not only in their eyes, but in those of the few wives and the half-clad children who played on the waste heap — Job came to be called "The Reverend," and looked up to as a spiritual leader.

It was the day that he went down to the eight-hundred-foot level that it began. He well remembered it. Up to the left of the stamp-mill, not far from the main office, was a square, red-painted building, up whose steps, just as the bell in the brick store's tower struck the set time, a procession of clean-faced miners went in and a procession of grimy ones came out. It was at the one o'clock shift that Job went in that day, watched the men hang their coats on what seemed to him an endless line of pegs, take

their stand one by one on the little platform which stood in the center of the floor like a trap-door, grasp the iron-bar above them, and at the tinkling of a bell vanish suddenly down into darkness out of sight.

It was the first time Job had been down the mine. The sight of the constantly-disappearing figures on the cage that came and went did not encourage him to go, but soon it was his turn. One of the men he knew grasped one side of the bar of the trapeze over him, one the other, the bell tinkled, and down he dropped with a jump that almost took his breath; down past long, subterranean tunnels of arched rock, which, from the heat he felt from them, and the blinding glare of the lights, seemed to him like the furnaces of Vulcan. Further still he dropped to the eight-hundred-foot level, where he stepped off in a narrow cavern dimly lighted and stretching away into the distant darkness. Oh, how hot it was! The brawny, white-chested miners had thrown off all clothing but their trousers, and were dividing their time between mighty blows on the great solid rocks, and the air-shaft and tub of water, where every few minutes they had to go and bathe lungs and face. The sound of the picks, the rattle of the ore cars bringing the stuff to be hauled up the shaft, the steady thump, thump, of the pumps removing the water from the lower levels, the intermittent drop and rise of the cage, filled the weird place with strange sounds.

Job had delivered his message to the "boss" of the tunnel and was hurrying back to the cage, when a half-naked miner, all stained with the ever-dripping ooze from above, stopped him and said:

"Be ye the faither that prayed Yankee Sam t'rough?"

"Why — yes, and no," answered Job. "I was with Yankee Sam when he died, but I'm no priest or parson."

"Aye, I said to Pat it was ye as ye went down, priest or not. I've heard of ye, and the mon that could shrive Yankee Sam is a good enough priest for any mon. Now, me boy Tim is dying, the only of his mother, and she in her grave. Tim and me, we live alone in the hut of Finnigan's saloon. Tim's a frail lad would work in the mines, and the hot this place and the cold air whin he wi gave him the lung faver, and the docto he's got to go. The next shift I'm goi to him. Meet me at the pump-house. tell him yez is not a priest; it's all the to him, and he'll die aisier if he think faither's come. Poor Tim, me only bo

What could Job do but consent? could he do late that afternoon but me broken-hearted Irish father at the p house and climb the steep street to gan's, and go in back to the poor hut the miner called home?

On a low, matted bed of straw and a blanket or two, in a corner of the d shanty, through which the cold winds s lay Tim, dying. The hectic flush was thin cheek, the glaze of death seemed eye. He reached his wan hand to Jo lad of sixteen he was, but no more ye life were there for him.

"Tim, the faither's come. Tim, me confess now and get ready for hiven."

The boy glanced up. Perhaps Jo look like a priest, with his smooth fac manly countenance. He hardly knew to say or do except to take that weak in his and press it with a brother's clasp of sympathy. The dying boy to his inmost heart.

"Faither," the boy faltered, "I a sick! I have been a bad boy some I — I —" Then he stopped to cough continued, "I haven't been to mass year — no chance here, faither — and drunk last Fourth — may the Holy M forgive me! — and I have been so bad times. But —" and he faltered, "I good mother, and she had me chris right early."

"Aye, she was!" sobbed Tim's fathe

"And," Tim went on, "and I'm so for the bad! When you say the prayer

her I'm sorry; for, somehow I think the blessed Jesus" — and here the boy crossed himself — "the blessed Jesus will hear my mother's prayer for Tim as soon as he'd hear his own. Faither, is it wrong to think so?"

And Job, thinking of his own mother, with tears in his eyes could only say, "No, Tim, no."

The lad grew still; and kneeling, Job talked low of God's great love, as he had talked to Yankee Sam, prayed as best he could, and felt as if he had indeed committed this mother's boy into the keeping of his God, as Tim lay still and dead before him.

CHAPTER XVI.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

THE news of Job's visit to the dying boy soon spread through all the miners' shanties, and soon more than one request came to him for sympathy and help. Preacher or priest, or only humble Job Malden — it mattered not what they thought of him. Job went on his errands of mercy, till, unconsciously to himself, he had won his way into the hearts of those rough, simple-hearted people, who lived more underground than above, at the Yellow Jacket Mine. In fact, so generally did he become known as "The Parson," that it was sometimes uncomfortable, especially on the occasion when Lem Jones wanted to get married. Oh, that was amusing!

It was in the spring. The new tri-weekly stage from Gold City was so late that night that it was pitch dark before it drew up, with a flourish, at the store. Job was busy at the books, and had not gone to supper, when a man came peeping in at the window and shouted through the glass:

"Job, you're wanted at Finnigan's Hotel!"

Donning his cap, and hurrying along the street and up the break-neck stairs to Finnigan's, Job entered the room which served as parlor, bar and office, and saw Lem Jones, one of the men at the hoisting works, "dressed up" in a suit much too large for him, with high white collar and red tie, while near by sat a tall, unnaturally rosy-cheeked spinster dressed in a trailing white gown, with orange blossoms covering a white veil hung over her hair, and an immense feather fan in her white-gloved hand. Around the room, decorated with some Christmas greens and lit by a red-hot stove, was gathered a group of interested observers of all descriptions — some evidently invited guests, some as evidently not.

"Mr. Parson, this 'ere's my gal, come from down East. We want to get spliced, and." with a blush, "we're waitin' for ye to do it."

"Why, Lem, I can't!" stammered Job, quite abashed and taken aback at the occurrence.

"Oh, yes," interrupted Lem, "I thought of that. Here's the paper — got it myself of the clerk. Read it. See, here it is: 'Lemuel Jones, a native of Maine and resident of the county of Grizzly, aged thirty-seven, and Phebe Ann Standish, a native of Massachusetts, resident of Boston, State of Massachusetts, aged thirty-one — "

Quick as a flash, drowning Job's protest that he was not a preacher, came a woman's shrill voice:

"Thirty-one! I'd like to know who said I was thirty-one! Lem Jones, take your pen and ink, and correct that. Anybody would know I am only twenty-one!"

A general laugh followed. Job finally found a chance to make the pair understand that his performing the ceremony was out of the question, as he had no legal authority — was not a minister.

The wedding party broke up in confusion. The cook was filled with wrath at Job for spoiling the dinner; "the boys" insisted that he had kept Jones from "settin' it up," and ought to do so himself; the bride refused to be comforted and vowed she would go back to Boston.

It was less than a week after the wedding which did not come off, that Job saw Dan at the pay-window beckoning to him. Going nearer, Dan motioned him to lean over, drew him close, and whispered in his ear:

"I'm broke, Job, but got a fine chance to clear a slick hundred. Lend me fifty till to-morrow."

"I can't do that, Dan," Job replied. "It's not mine, and I wouldn't take a cent of the company's money for myself."

"Ye're a pretty parson!" hissed Dan, "sayin' prayers over dyin' folks, and never helpin' yer own cousin out of a tight place!"

"But, Dan, I can't take the company's money. If I had fifty of my own you should have it, though I suspect you want to gamble with it," replied Job.

"Yer won't give it to me?" said the other.

"No, I can't, Dan," Job answered in a firm voice.

"Yer hypocrite! Yer think yer got the cinch on me, don't yer, Job Malden! 'It's a long lane that has no turn,' they say, and yer'll wish some day yer'd treated Dan Dean square!" and he turned with a leer and was gone.

More than once after that Job felt uneasy and wretched as he thought of the possibility of Jane's linking her life with that of Daniel Dean. Twice he tried to write her, but he blotted the paper in his nervousness, and at last tore the letters up.

By a strange coincidence, it was the same week that Andrew Malden struck a rich pocket of gold back of Lookout Point and secretly carried it down to Gold City bank and paid off the mortgage on the four hundred acres back of the mill, that Job Malden was held up.

This is how it happened: Just after hours one night the superintendent called Job into his private office and said:

"Young man, how much will you sell yourself for?"

Decidedly startled, Job answered: "What do you mean, sir?"

"I mean," said the portly, gray-haired man, with his set mouth and black ey business. "Can I trust you with a larg of money? or will the temptation to for yourself be too strong?"

"Sir," answered Job indignantly, ' have no price! I want none but money as mine."

"Well, all right, my boy; I guess trust you," said his employer. "Now, some bullion to be taken down to the Fargo office at Gold City, to go off morning stage. You will find Dic horse, saddled at the stable. Eat som per, mount Dick, come around to the r my house, and the bag will be waiting it down to the Wells-Fargo office, whe man will be waiting to get it. I hav him word. Hurry now! And min don't lose any of it. Will give you a extra pay if you get through all right

With a "Thank you, sir; I'll do the can," Job hurried off on his responsi rand.

It was a beautiful moonlight even June. Crossing the summit of the tain, the fresh breeze fanned his heated with the warm day's labor, a walked Dick along, drinking in once with genuine joy the grandeur of the r robed in silver light. Just beyond Hennessy's, as he turned into the road, clouds obscured the moon and a ber pall fell over the road. He felt that his treasure was safe, and urge into a canter.

He had not gone far when he thou heard horse's hoofs behind him. He s to listen, his heart beating a little quickly, and then hurried on. Again, distinctly, he heard them coming dov last hill. He put spurs to Dick as a s fear came over him. Up the hill befo he rode at a gallop, and on down the Faster and louder in the dim darknes the hoofs of the horse behind hin was being pursued — there was no do it now. If there had been, the repor pistol and the whiz of a bullet past hi

would have quickly dispelled it. Then began a wild chase. Up hill and down hill, over rough creek-beds, down the Gold City road, they flew. How Job wished for Bess! She could have outdistanced any horse, but Dick was not her equal. The hoof-beats in the rear grew louder.

Job was just going over the hill to Mormon Bar, on that narrow place where the bank pitches down to the creek two hundred feet, when he heard a voice, emphasized by a ringing bullet, cry:

"Halt, you thief! I'm the sheriff of Grizzly county!"

Whether it was because Dick stumbled and almost fell, or because his strength failed, or because of the bullet and the strange command, Job halted, stunned, to look into the dark barrel of a pistol and to see the white, masked face of a slim fellow in blue jean overalls and with a red handkerchief about his throat.

"Hand over that boodle mighty quick! Thought I was a sheriff, did yer? Ha! ha! None of your back talk! Give it here or swallow this!" poking the pistol into Job's very mouth. The voice was familiar — more than once Job had heard it.

He sprang from Dick to run as the other held his bridle, but heard the whiz of a bullet past him and felt a stunning blow on his head. When he came to, the treasure was gone and he could hear a horse's hoofs pounding faintly in the distance. On his side, with the blood oozing from his temples, Dick — poor Dick — lay dead!

It was a long walk back to the mine, and the first morning shift was going to work when Job reached there. The superintendent heard his tale, and without comment told him to get his breakfast and go to work. Later he called Job in and asked some very strange questions. Twice during the following day with aching head and troubled heart Job tried to get another interview with the superintendent, but failed.

How it came about he never knew, but before the end of the week it was common gossip around the mine that Job had made way with the company's bullion to clear off the mortgage on Andrew Malden's place. Job had never heard of the mortgage, and he tried to tell the superintendent so; but he would not listen. All he did was to tell Job on Saturday night that they did not know who took the money, but they would need his services no longer.

It was just as Andrew Malden was locking the doors for the night, that — with a small bundle thrown over his shoulder, shamefaced, discouraged, and so tired he could hardly walk another step — Job pushed in and sat down in the old rocker. The older man was surprised enough. What did it all mean? Job had soon told his story — the night ride, the robbery, the long walk back to the mine, the strange suspicion that had fallen on him, the refusal to believe his story, the coldness of his employers, his dismissal, and the sad walk home. He told it all through, then looking up into Andrew Malden's face, said brokenly:

"God knows, uncle, it's true, every word!"

Andrew Malden never doubted the blue-eyed, homeless boy who had grown to be the stalwart young man on whom he leaned more and more. It was a great comfort to Job when the old man told him this, and declared he would go over there in the morning and settle this matter; they would believe Andrew Malden. Then he thought of the mortgage; he had paid that, and no one knew where he got the money — and now perhaps they would not believe him if he did tell them. Perhaps he had better not go after all.

Late into the night the two talked it over, till they saw how dark things really looked for them. Well enough they knew who was the guilty person, but who could prove it? Finally Andrew Malden took down the old family Bible and read: "What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" The

reader laid stress on that word "persecution." On he read: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus."

"Amen," said Job, as the old man laid down the book. "Yes, and it says that 'all things work together for good to them that love God.'"

Together they knelt in prayer, and to Him who knows the secret integrity of our hearts, as well as our secret sins, they committed the burden that rested on their souls.

The next day was Sunday, a lovely June Sunday. The sunbeams were playing across his face when Job awoke, and the fragrance of roses filled the room as they looked in at the open window. How still and beautiful was all the world! No thumping machinery, no jangling voices, no grimy faces passing the window! Flowers and sunshine and the songs of birds, and — home! Oh, how happy he felt!

He dropped on his knees the first thing, in a prayer that was almost a psalm. He went downstairs in two jumps, and was out hugging Bess in no time, telling her she was the best horse that ever lived. Then he went racing Shot down to the milk-house, where he nearly upset Tony with a pail of foaming milk. The big fellow stared and said:

"'Pears like you done gone clean crazy, Marse Job! Guess you think you's a kid agin!"

When Job took the pail away from him and bore it safely in on his head, Tony chuckled and said, "Bress de Lawd, Marse Job! You's mighty good to me."

Job waited for no more of Tony's praises, but hurried off, with Shot barking at his heels. Never had the old ranch looked more beautiful to him — the house yard, the big barns, the giant pasture lot with the clump of live-oaks next the yard, the forests on all four sides, the wild-flowers covering th ture with a variegated carpet, the gard the side hill. Job was a boy again, a came in panting, to nearly run over the new Chinese cook, who was not u such scenes at quiet Pine Tree Ranc

Not long after breakfast they had pr at which Job insisted that Tony and and Sing should all be present. As he l around at the scene, the African and M lian sitting attentive while he rea words, "They shall come from the ea the west, and sit down in the kingd God," he thought the promise was kep morning at the ranch.

After devotions, Sing surprised the by saying, "Me Clistian. Me go to m in Chinatown, San Flancisco. Me say no good. Me play (pray) heap. Jeso l Sing. Me feel heap good."

They were overjoyed. Andy Malden hands heartily all around. Hans said Vaterland, Hans was sehr goot; pra Hans, he goot here."

That was the great love-feast at Pin Ranch, which Tony loved to tell ab long as he lived.

The church was crowded that S when Job and Andrew Malden drove hind the team of grays, with a lunch t under the seat, so they could stay al It was Communion Sunday. The neat cloth which covered the table in front pulpit told the story as they pushed way in. The congregation was si "Safely through another week, Go brought us on our way," and Job th it was a long, long week since he h in the old church and heard that How natural it looked! The bare walls, with here and there a crack had carved a not inartistic line up the The stiff wooden pulpit, almost hid under the June roses. The same pr who had said that Christmas night, thou be baptized in this faith?" The organ in the corner. The old familiar looking up from the benches, and som

ones. There had been a revival that winter in the church, and now Job could see its results. The whole congregation was sprinkled with faces he used to see in the saloons and on the streets, but had never hoped to see in church. Aye, and there were some faces missing. Where was old Grandpa Reynolds, who at that long-ago camp-meeting sang "Palms of victory, crowns of glory I shall wear"? A strange feeling came over Job as he remembered that he had gone Home to wear the crown of a sainted life.

"Some of the host have crossed the flood,
And some are crossing over."

The choir was singing the words. Job thought again of the aged saint. He thought of Yankee Sam and that wild night when he died; of Tim, poor Irish Tim; and then of that sweet face in the plain wooden casket in the strange California city — his boyhood's idol — and the tears started to his eyes.

"Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious." That was the text. The preacher was beginning the sermon, and Job called back his thoughts and leaned forward to listen.

"I think the tears were streaming down Peter's face when he uttered these words. The memories of a lifetime crowded upon him. He was a young man back by the Lake of Gennesaret, and looked up to see Andrew's excited face and hear him say, 'Peter, brother, we have found the great man; we have found the Messiah.' He was by those same waters mending the nets, ready to push out for the day's toil, and lo! he heard a voice — oh, how wonderful it was! — there was authority in it, soul in it: 'Peter, come follow me,' and he dropped the nets, and went out to life's sea to fish for men. Ah, yes, I think as Peter wrote these words he remembered his solemn vows of loyalty, his ecstatic joy on the Mount of Transfiguration, and then, alas! his awful sin when he deserted Jesus in that dark terrible morning of the great trial. Oh, those bitter hours! Peter could not forget them."

Job trembled; he knew what the preacher meant, he knew how Peter felt.

"But," continued the speaker, "how sweet there came back to him the memory of another morning by the same Galilean waters, as he mused in the twilight, and heard the Savior call, not in anger but in love, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' And back again, there where he had first loved Him, Peter came to the old life of love and loyalty. Memories of Pentecost, memories of life's trials and joys, ever transformed by the spiritual presence of his Master, made Peter cry from the depths of his soul, 'Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious.'"

And Job in his heart said, "Amen."

Then the preacher went on, showing how that which endears anything in this world to our hearts should make Jesus doubly precious. He talked of money — of the treasure of the Sierras, and how much one thought it would buy; but after all, how little of love and hope and faith it could bring into a heart — those things which alone last as the years go on.

It was a pathetic little story he told of a baby's funeral up in one of the lonely, forsaken, sage-bush deserts, where, alone with the broken-hearted father amid the bitter winds and snows of a bleak March morning, he laid the only babe of a stricken home to rest in the frozen earth, many miles from any human habitation; of how the father leaned over and said, as the box vanished into the ground, "Sing 'God be with you till we meet again,'" and how, as they sang it, out against the winter storm the light of heaven came into that man's face. "Tell me," the minister asked, as he leaned over the pulpit, "how much gold could buy the comfort afforded by that hymn and that hope?" And Job, thinking of the thousands he had handled at the Yellow Jacket, felt that that hymn was worth it all.

Then the preacher talked of diamonds and of the preciousness of Jesus; of the trinkets hid away in many an old trunk, precious because of memories that clustered around them; and Job thought of his mother's Testament. He said the life-memories that cluster around Jesus are more precious than any other; and Job said "Amen" to that. At last he talked of friends and how they are worth more than gold or diamonds or relics of the past; and Job thought of Aunty Perkins — why, there she was across the aisle, as intent as he; the sight of her face cheered him. Then he thought of Jane — where was she? Job looked furtively about, but could not see her. A little unrest filled his soul.

"No gold can buy so much pleasure for your poor heart, no diamond is rarer, no relic brings back sweeter memories, no friend sticks closer, than Jesus. The flood of time may sweep friends beyond your reach, the mighty Sierras may crumble to dust, old earth may sink into space, and you be alone with the stars and eternity, but it is written, 'I will not leave thee nor forsake thee.' Jesus will be with you for time and eternity. 'Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious.'"

Job heard Tony shout, "Hallelujah! Bress de Lawd!" and came very near following his example.

"He's the Lily of the valley,
The Bright and Morning Star,"

rang out through the church, and voice after voice took it up:

"In sorrow He's my comfort,
In trouble He's my stay,"

and when it came to that place — he could not help it — Job did murmur "Amen."

For a moment an overwhelming wave of emotion passed over his soul, then he found the congregation rising, heard like a chant the words, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father," and the Communion Service had begun.

Just then the sun came in through a broken shutter, lighting the sacramental table with an almost supernatural glory, and Job felt a mighty love for the Savior fill his heart and almost unconsciously found himself singing with the congregation:

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Glory be to Thee, O Lord, most high! Amen."

When a little later he knelt at the altar with bowed head, as he heard the minister's voice saying, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee," he resolved that from that hour, health, talent, manhood, all he could be at his best, should be given to God and to men.

At the close of the service Job saw Jane in the aisle before him, and walked to the door with her, talking as in the old days. He longed to say more, but did not. A thrill of happiness came into Jane's heart. Perhaps he did care for her after all, she thought.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE STRIKE.

"MARSE JOB, dar's a gemman wid a mighty fine hoss wants to hab de pleasure ob seeing de young marse," said Tony, poking his head inside the door on the Friday afternoon after Job came home.

The young man grasped his cap and hurried to the gate, finding there, to his surprise and consternation, the superintendent of the Yellow Jacket Mine sitting in his buggy. At sight of Job, he sprang out, extended his gloved hand to the lad, and proceeded to surprise him still more by saying that he had come after him, as they wanted him back; he felt sure he now knew who had taken the money, though he could not arrest the person; he was very sorry he had so greatly wronged Job; would raise his salary.

Job was greatly astonished. He expressed his thanks, but finally managed to stammer

out that he really had had all he cared for of mining life, and did not want to leave the old ranch.

Then the man took his arm, and as they walked up and down together, he told Job there was trouble brewing at the mine; the men were reading all the news they could get about the great mining strike East, and a whole crowd stood in front of the store each evening between shifts, listening to agitators; the fellow Dean was talking strike on the sly to all the men, and he was afraid that under the passing excitement the best of the men would be duped by worthless leaders. So he wanted Job back; Job knew the men, they liked him, they would hear him; the company needed him, it must have him at any salary.

So Job went back to the Yellow Jacket with the memory of that home-coming to cheer him in the dark times that were to follow. When the next day the scowling men came one by one to the pay-window at the office, muttering about starvation wages, they looked surprised to see Job there. Some reached out their rough hands for a shake, and said, "Shure and it does me eyes good to see you, lad;" others only scowled the deeper; and one looked almost as if shot, forgot his pay, and turned and walked away muttering, "Bother the saint! He's forever in my way!"

It was just two weeks from that day that the storm broke at the Yellow Jacket Mine. A deep undertone of discontent and rebellion had filled the air during that time. Job had felt it more plainly than he had heard it. The superintendent had kept a calm, firm face, though Job knew he was anything but calm within.

It was just before Job had gotten ready on Saturday to shove up the pay-window and begin his weekly task, that a group of burly men, with O'Donnell, the boss of the eight-hundred-foot level, as spokesman, came in and desired to see the superintendent. Calmly that gentleman stepped up and wished to know what was wanted. Well, nothing in particular, was the reply; only they had a paper they wished him to sign. He took it and read it. It was a strange document, evidently prepared by O'Donnell himself. It read as follows:

"The Yellow Jacket Mining Company will Pay all men That work on the mine 20 pursent more To-day And all the time."

The superintendent folded up the paper, and, handing it back to the men, turned and walked into the office without a word.

"Here, boss!" cried O'Donnell, "yez didn't plant yer name on the paper! Ain't yez goin' to give the hands their dues?"

Then the superintendent turned and explained to the men that he could not sign any such agreement; had no authority to; only the directors in San Francisco and New York could authorize it; that the mine could not afford it; that the men had no complaint — it was only false sympathy with distant strikes which caused them to make this demand; that he would not sign such a document if he could.

The men left in a rage. At the noon shift all the hands came up from the mine; not one went down. The machinery stopped; not a wheel turned, not even the pumps that were so necessary to keep the lower levels from being flooded. At one o'clock the men began to come for their pay, not one doing so in the morning. Each demanded a raise of twenty per cent. on his wages, and, when this was refused by Job, threw his money back on the shelf, and walked out without a word.

Hour after hour it went on — a constant procession of determined men looking into Job's eyes, and each face growing harder, it seemed to him, than the one before. Some did not dare look him in the eye, but mumbled over the same well-learned speech which someone had taught them, and went away. They were the ones Job had befriended in distress.

Dan came in with head high in air, and talked as if he had never seen Job; he de-

justice for such hard-worked fellows
elf and his father, and gave a long
ıe about the oppressed classes, till
perintendent interposed and said:
. Dean, if you have any personal
nce, come to me individually. Do not
ade that window; take your money
go."

d Dan went off in a white rage, leaving
money behind him.

t six o'clock Job put on his coat and cap,
l followed the superintendent and cashier
the door. There they found armed sen-
nels pacing all about the stone office build-
ıg, and O'Donnell and his crowd waiting.
They would be obliged, they were sorry to
say, to inform them that the men had de-
cided the "boss and his crew" should not
go home till the "twenty per cent." was
paid; that some food from the men's board-
ing-house would be sent them, and they
would have to stay in the office till they
came to terms.

There was no alternative. They were en-
trapped, and there was no escape. Grim
faces looked at them from all sides.

Back into the office they turned and locked
the doors, to open them only when a huge
quantity of poor food that looked like the
remains of the miners' dinner, was handed
in. Again they swung the iron doors to,
barred them, and sat down for the night,
with the unpleasant fact staring them in the
face that they were besieged and helpless.
Apparently they had not a friend in all the
crowd that surged to and fro in the narrow
streets. There was no way of letting the
outside world know their plight.

What a night that was! At first the sound
of excited voices and the distant harangues
of saloon-steps orators, then all quieted
down; there was not even the hum of the
machinery — only the dull tramp of the
guards without, and the far-away call,
"Twelve o'clock and all's well," which told
they had a picket line on the outer edge of

asleep in a heap on the

floor, with other sleeping forms about him. He dreamed of home and Jane, heard Tony shout "Bress de Lawd!" and awoke to find himself aching in every bone from the hard floor. The light had gone out. Outside all he could hear was tramp, tramp, tramp. Then he heard voices. They came nearer. He crept to the key-hole and listened.

"Let's burn the thing and kill 'em, and run the mine ourselves!" said one voice.

"Yer blockhead, don't yer know it's stone?" drawled another. "No, gentlemen, we'll fix 'em if they don't give us our dues to-morrow! We'll starve 'em out, and yer bet they'll sign mighty quick! We don't want their lives; we want justice, and —"

The voice died away in the distance. Job was sure it was Dan's.

Sunday came and went with no end of the siege. It was a long day in the office. The superintendent pored over the books, and pretended to forget he was a prisoner. They took down only the topmost shutters. Some of the clerks got out a pack of cards, and asked Job to take a hand. One said contemptuously, "Oh, you're a goody-goody, parson!" when he refused, but the others quickly silenced him in a way that showed their respect for Job. The cards dropped from their hands before long, and each seemed occupied with his own thoughts. Twice during the day "the gang" sent O'Donnell presented themselves at the door with the paper, and were refused. Then hands seemed to resign themselves to a tedious siege. On the whole it was quiet enough side, except for the occasional jangling voices and the sentry's pacing.

Towards night the uproar grew louder. The saloons were doing a big business, the sound of rollicking songs and drunken brawls was in the air. Job grew restless and paced the office floor. About five o'clock a delegation came for someone to confer men at a conference on the waste-heap of the quartz mill. The superintendent refused to go, and asked Job to do so. "They dare not hurt you," he said.

So between two armed, burly guards, Job went to look into the face of the strangest audience he had ever seen. A solid throng they stood on the bare, flat hill that rounded off at one end of the cañon below. Irishmen, Swedes, Portuguese, Germans, Chinese, Yankees — all nationalities were there, in overalls and blue jumpers, puffing at long pipes, and wedged in a solid mass about an old ore car that served as platform. Dan was speaking; he was talking of the starving miners in "Colorady," and pointed to the office building, crying, "We'll show them bloated 'ristocrats how nice it feels to starve!" while a din of voices cried, "Hear! hear!"

Pushing their way to the flat-car, his muscular escorts hauled Job up and shouted:

"The parson, lads — Mr. Job. He's goin' to talk wid yez!"

"May the Holy Mother defind him!" cried a voice in the crowd. "He's the praist of me Tim!"

"The fraud!" cried another; "he's as bad as the rist! Nary a per cint. would he give me yesterday!"

"Hush, ye blatherskite!" hissed another. "Give the lad a chance; he's a-talkin'!"

Yes, Job was talking. He did his best. He expressed the utmost sympathy with the wrongs of every man, and reminded them that they had no truer friend in the Yellow Jacket than he. He had nursed their sick, buried their dead, had been one of them in all the struggles of their lives. Voice after voice in the crowd said, "That's so! Hear! Hear!" "Hurrah fer the lad!" cried another. "Three cheers for the little parson!"

Then he talked to them of the strike, and said every man had a right to quit work and the Union to strike, but no man or Union had the right to starve their fellow-beings; he spoke of the unreasonableness of this strike — the company here was not to blame for the troubles in Colorado; he reminded them that the times were hard and the cities crowded with idle men, yet the company had kept them busy and given them full wages; he urged them, if they must demand more, to go on with work and send a committee to present their claims to the directors.

Cheers and hisses grew louder and louder as he spoke. The storm grew fiercer and fiercer. Job saw it was of no use. A dozen voices were yelling, "On with the strike! Starve 'em out!" Someone — could it be Dan? — shouted:

"Hang the hypocrite! — coming here advising his betters! String him up!"

A loud hubbub followed. Job breathed a deep, silent prayer and stood firm. A tall, brawny man clambered up beside him and cried, as he brandished a pistol:

"Death to any mon that touches the kid! May all the saints keep him!"

Tim's father meant business. And through the angry mob he steered Job back to the office in safety.

When the supper was handed in at six, the men who brought it said that would be the last food till they signed the paper; the miners had voted to starve them out.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RACE WITH DEATH.

"JOB, you'll have to go. No one knows this country as you do, and no one can do it but you."

It was the superintendent speaking. Huddled in a group the little company sat in the dark, looking death in the face. Surrender, death, or outside help, were the only alternatives. They could keep from starvation for a day more on the provisions they had. Someone must go through the lines and get help. They had decided that it was useless to call on the sheriff, for he could never raise a posse large enough to cope with this mob, now armed and well prepared. Troop A was on duty near Wawona, guarding the Yosemite Reservation. Someone must go and notify them, and telegraph to the Secretary of War and get orders for them to come to

the relief of the besieged men. It was a dangerous undertaking. Even if one could pass through the line around the office, would he ever be able to get through the streets alive? And then would he ever get past the outer picket?

Someone must take the risk. Someone must go, and perhaps die for the others. One of the clerks said he guessed Job was the best prepared. The superintendent urged him to go. Finally rising, Job said he knew both the way and the peril it meant, and he would make the attempt.

Not even to them did he tell the route he would take and the dangers he knew he must face. He had a plan, and if it succeeded there was hope; if it failed, there was no getting back. One silent prayer in the corner, and he crept softly and hastily through the half-open door, as the sentinel went down towards the other end of his beat.

There Job lay flat on the ground and waited to see who it was. In the dim twilight he descried, as the sentinel turned, no other than Tim's father. Job stole up to him, caught him before he cried "Halt!" and said:

"For Tim's sake, Mr. Rooney, let me through the lines. We will starve in there!"

"Job, me boy, is that ye!" whispered the guard. "Hiven bless ye! I wish I could let yez t'rough, but by the saints I can't! I've sworn that I wouldn't let a soul pass, and they said if a mon wint t'rough the line and me here, they'd finish me!"

Job pleaded, and the tears streamed from Pat Rooney's eyes, but he was firm; he had given his word, and he could not break it. But after what seemed to Job a long time, Pat said:

"Job, if ye'll promise me no mon but the one ye go to see shall see yez, and that ye'll come back to-morrow night and be here if the soldier boys come, so no one will know I let yez t'rough, I'll let yez go; and Job, I'll be at the ind of Sullivan's alley and pass yez; and then the next shift I'll be here, and ye'll get in safe."

Job promised. Many times afterward he wished he had not; but he made up his mind, as he slunk through, with Pat's "Hiven bliss ye!" following him, that only death should prevent him from keeping his word.

Just back of the office was the abandoned shaft where he had gone often to pray. Once he had sounded its sides, and suspected that it opened into the first level. If this was the case, and he could get into that, and from that into the next lower level, Job knew that the end of that one went clear through to the old half-finished drainage-tunnel which ran in from the cañon back of the quartz mill. Once in the tunnel he knew that he could reach the cañon, then get outside the lines and away.

It took but a moment to drop down the old shaft, which ran down but a few hundred feet on a steep slant. Then rapping softly on the wall, he thought he heard a hollow sound. There were voices above him. He kept still and lay down close against the side till they passed on. Then he dug a hole, inch by inch, till he could reach his arm through. No doubt this was the tunnel!

Finally, after what seemed hours — though it was not even one — Job had the opening almost large enough to crawl through. Then he struck the timbers — how was he to get through now? Well, just how, he never knew; but he did. He dropped down to the floor of the level, lit a little candle he had with him, ran along to the big shaft, and saw the ladder reaching down to the next level. Then he bethought himself that his light might be seen, so he blew it out. How could he get down the ladder in the dark? One misstep and — he shuddered at the thought. But he would dare it.

It was slow work, step by step; but at last he found an open space through the boards, reached out a little lower and felt the floor of the second level, and stepped off safe. Along the wooden rails laid for the ore-cars

he felt his way, till he began to grow confused. He must have a light; surely no one could see it. Then he thought he again heard voices. He stood still. He could hear his heart beat. It was only the drip of water from the roof. He lit the candle and hurried on. The air was close and hot, but he never stopped. On down the long, dark cavern he made his way by the flickering light of the fast-dying candle.

At last he reached the spot where he was sure the drainage tunnel and the second level met. Again he dug and dug, using an old pick he found there. He tore at the hard earth with his fingers, till he found himself growing drowsy and faint. It was the foul air! He must get through the wall soon, or perish where he was. The candle was gone. Now it was a life-and-death struggle. He thought of that night in the snow and his awful dread of death. All was so different now. A great peace filled his soul. But he must not die; he must get through; other lives were in his care; starving men were awaiting him; his promise to Tim's father must be kept. At it he went again. He felt something give way, felt a breath of fresh air that revived him, lifted a silent thanksgiving to God, and crept through into the drainage tunnel.

The pickets on the banks above were calling, "Three o'clock and all's well," as Job crept silently down the cañon and made for the heavy timber of the mountain opposite.

The bugle had just sounded "taps" at Camp Sheridan, on the flat between the South Fork and the Yosemite Fall road, one mile east of Wawona. The southern hills had echoed back its sweet, lingering notes. The blue-coats had turned in. The officer of the guard was inspecting the sentries, when the guard on Post Number Four saw a haggard, white-faced young fellow, with hat gone, clothes torn, hands bleeding from scratches, pull himself up the bank of the creek, and at the sentry's "Halt!" look up with anxious appeal and ask for the captain.

That instinct which is sometimes quicker than thought told the guard this was no ordinary case. In two minutes the corporal was escorting Job to the headquarters tent. What a dilapidated object he was! For twenty long hours he had been working his way over the rear of Pine Mountain, down the steep sides of the Gulch, up that terrible jungle which even the red man avoids, over the great boulders and falls of the South Fork, and up the long miles through the primeval wilderness to where he knew the white tents of Camp Sheridan lay.

The captain could hardly believe Job's story. The officers marveled at the heroism of the boy. But he told it all without consciousness of self, begged them for God's sake to lose no time, and fell over limp and faint at the captain's feet.

When he came to, it was dawn, the troops were in the saddle, and the sergeant was reading this telegram:

"Proceed at once to the Yellow Jacket Mine and quell the riot and disorder. LAMONT."

The horses were pawing the ground, the quartermaster was hurrying to and fro, the captain was buckling on his saber, and Job was lying on a cot in the surgeon's tent, while that good man was feeling his pulse.

Quick as he could, Job started up. "Are they off?" he cried.

"Yes, my boy; and you lie still. They'll settle those fellows over at the mine," was the reply.

"But, doctor, I must go! I promised Rooney! Let me go!"

"No, young man. You're plucky, but pluck won't do any more. A day or two here will fix you all right. Your pulse has been up to a hundred and four. You can't stir to-day."

Job was desperate. The bugle was sounding, the officers were shouting orders. Through the door of the tent and the grove of trees he could see troops forming.

"Send for the captain, doctor, please," he pleaded.

The captain came, heard Job's story, and shook his head.

Job was half frantic. What would Pat Rooney say? He begged the doctor with tears in his eyes. He beseeched the captain. At last they yielded. But how could he cross the line in the daytime? They would have to wait till night. Finally the captain said he would wait and send Job with a scout at dusk, and follow with the troops at midnight.

The bugle sounded recall, and the soldiers waited, so that Job could keep his promise. All that summer day as he lay on the cot, listening to the ripple of the spring, the neighing of the horses, the bugle-calls, and the coming and going of the men, he thought of those comrades shut in the store office without food, and waiting for relief which it must seem would never come.

Just at dusk, mounted behind a sturdy little trooper, and well disguised, Job started back. They passed around Wawona by a side trail; and, striking the main turnpike near its junction with the Signal Peak road, galloped on in the dark, fearing no recognition, and well prepared to meet anyone who demanded a halt. The light was burning in Aunty Perkins' window as they passed. It was after midnight when they crept slowly down the timber on the other side of Rattlesnake Gulch, and Job dismounted and stole on ahead.

A gloom rested on the Yellow Jacket. A few lights shone out of shanty windows and in saloons. The stars seemed to rest on the top of the smoke-stacks which rose like vast shadows in the distance. A low, far-off murmur of voices, now rising, now dying down, stole out on the clear night air.

Down Job crept, now on hands and knees, to the foot of Sullivan's alley. He heard a step. The sentry was coming. Job gave the call Pat and he had agreed upon — the sharp bark of a coyote. In an instant he saw a flash and heard a report, as a bullet whizzed past him. Then he heard voices:

"What was that, Jacob?"

"A leetle hund, I tinks."

"A hund? You shoot him not! You save bullets for bigger ting. See?"

Oh, where was Pat Rooney! It was fully an hour before the sentry's pace changed and the step sounded like Pat's. Again Job barked, and a hoot like an owl's replied. It was Tim's father! A few minutes, and Pat had clasped him to his heart, and told him the officers were still in the store office; that the men were desperate — they had been drinking heavily, and, he was afraid, before another night would burn the whole place. Would Job go back into the mine and take his chances?

Of course Job went. He slunk up the alley into a hidden passage-way he knew of back of the Last Chance Saloon, and kept in between the buildings till within a stone's throw of the office. There, wedged in between two old shanties, he had to wait two hours for Pat to get on the office beat. Oh, what a long night! Just ahead were the office and the starving men. Between them and their rescuer a Chinaman stalked, gun in hand, pig-tail bobbing in the night air, and eyes ever on the alert to see an intruder. In the bar-room Job could hear the talking. Dan Dean and O'Donnell were there. They were boasting that not a soul outside knew of the strike; that a late telephone to Gold City showed no one there knew; that the stage was still held at the stables; that there was no hope for "the boss and the tyrants." To-morrow they would sign that paper or take the consequences.

Job shuddered at the thought. Then he heard Dan chuckle over him. He "'lowed the biggest fun would be to see that pious fraud beg for mercy."

What if Dan knew he was listening, with only a board partition between them! Job hardly dared to breathe.

It was getting uncomfortably near dawn

when Job heard another owl's hoot and stole past Pat Rooney up to the rear door of the old stone office, which opened softly in a few minutes as he gave the well-known private tap of the clerks. What a wretched, haggard lot of men rose excitedly to meet him! He hushed them to silence. told his story, and bade them rest and wait a few hours. Troop A would surely be here.

It was daybreak, the dawn of the Fourth of July, when the sound of a bugle aroused the miners of the Yellow Jacket. Some thought it was some patriotic Yankee, but the clang, clang, of the old bell at the stone tower, the calls of the sentries, the rush of hundreds of half-dressed, excited men down the street, told everyone that trouble was in the air.

It was all done so quickly that the miners hardly knew where they were. The guards were on the run, and a troop of cavalry, with a solid front, stood facing the yelling, yet terrified, mob of men who blockaded lower Main street. It was only a hundred against five hundred men; but it was order, discipline, authority, against disorder, tumult and a mob. All rules were forgotten, all their plans went for naught. Dan yelled in vain. O'Donnell grew red in the face as he screamed orders. "Forward, march!" rang out the captain's voice, and a hundred sabers rattled and a hundred horses started, and five hundred terror-stricken men, each forgetful of all but himself, started in a panic to retreat.

From the open door of the office, deserted at the first alarm by the guards, the imprisoned officers of the company saw the mob come surging up the street.

Before noon the Yellow Jacket was a military camp. The miners were the prisoners, disarmed, a helpless crowd, the larger part already ashamed of having been influenced by such a man as O'Donnell. Before nightfall the men had personally signed an agreement to go to work on the morrow at the old terms, and were allowed to depart to their homes. The saloons were emptied of their liquors and closed until military law should be relaxed, and the ringleaders were on their way to the county jail at Gold City.

The strike was over without bloodshed, and when the men came to their sober senses, went back to their tasks, and saw the folly of it all — saw how they had been duped by demagogues — they were grateful that somebody had dared to end the strike, and Job was the hero of the hour. The reaction that sweeps over mob-mind swept him back into his place as the idol of their hearts.

We have said the leaders of the strike were taken to Gold City. No, not all. One lay crippled and fever-stricken in Pat Rooney's shanty back of Finnegan's. Pat had found him when the mob rushed back, borne down by the men he was trying to stop, and trampled on by some of the cavalcade of horsemen as they swept up the street.

Hurried hither by Pat, Job entered the familiar hut to find himself face to face with Dan. All that long day he sat by the side of the delirious patient. The soldiers, when arresting the men, let Pat stay at Job's plea. The troop surgeon came and ordered Job away. "Sick enough yourself, without nursing this mischief-maker who's the cause of all this bad business," said he.

But no; Job would not go. Dan was bad. Dan was his enemy, but "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them which despitefully use you," to Job meant watching by Dan Dean when his own head was aching and the fever was even then creeping upon him.

All night he sat there, bathing the head that tossed restlessly to and fro. He heard the delirious lad mutter, "Curse the pious crank! He'll get Jane yet!" then half rise, and say with a strange look in his eyes, "Stand fast, boys! Stand, ye cowards! It's justice we want!" and fall back exhausted. Yes, it was Job who stood by, praying with

all his heart, as at daylight the doctor did what seemed inevitable if Dan's life was to be saved — amputated the crushed, broken right leg. Never again would he roam over the Sierras as he had when a boy. For the sins of those awful days Dan was giving part of his very life.

Once he opened his eyes and saw Job, and as he caught the meaning of it all, a queer look came over his face. Finally he muttered:

"Job, go away from me! I don't deserve a thing from you! I can stand the pain better than seein' you fixin' me!" and a hot tear stole down the blanched, hardened face.

But still Job stayed, as the delirium came back and the fever fought with the doctor for the mastery. Only when the danger line seemed past, and the noon bell was striking, Job passed out of the old shanty, up the street by the crowds of men going to the noon shift, heard the roar of the machinery, staggered in at the office door and fell across the hard floor.

They were harvesting the August hay on the Pine Tree Ranch before Job left his invalid chair on the rose-covered porch and mounted Bess for a dash down to the mill with some of his old-time vigor.

CHAPTER XIX.

"DRIFTING."

SHE stood in the cabin door, where the morning sunlight stole through the branches and vines and played around her head. Against the well-worn post of this plain, unpainted old hut she leaned with a far-away look in her eyes. Nineteen years ago to-day she was born here where the hills shut in Blackberry Valley and the trees roofed it over. From the stream yonder she had learned the ripple of childhood's laughter; up yonder well-worn trail she had climbed these long years, away to the great outside world — to the Frost Creek school and the Gold City church. It was over the same trail that, wearing shoes for almost the first time in her life, and attired in a black calico dress and a black straw hat which the neighbors had brought her, Jane had taken her father's rough hand, long years ago, one summer day, and followed her mother to the grave. Ten years she had done a woman's work to try and keep a home for Tom Reed.

How much longer would it be? The impulses and longings of a maiden's heart were stirring within her. Father's rough, good-natured kindness still cheered her lonely life, but the morning sun would kiss two graves in God's Acre yonder some day instead of one. The father's step was feeble and the years were going fast, and she would be alone. Alone? Ah, no, not alone, for the loving Christ was hers. Ever since the old Coyote Valley camp-meeting a new friendship, a new happiness, had come into her life. No one who knew her could doubt it. It had added to the natural frankness of her modest, unsophisticated nature a staunchness of character, a womanliness, and a nobility of soul that gave her the admiration and respect of all true hearts. Yet how few knew her! Like earth's rarest flowers, Jane Reed's life blossomed in this hidden dell unknown to the great world. She had the love of Christ in her soul, and yet she longed, she knew not why, for some strong human love to fill to its completeness the fullness of her heart.

So she stood that morning dreaming of love — the old, old dream of life. And who should it be? One of two, of course. No others had ever come close enough to pay court at the portal of her soul. Job or Dan — Dan or Job? Sooner or later her life must be linked with one or the other. Dan cared for her. How often he had said it! — almost till it seemed commonplace. But she had never said yes; yet somehow she enjoyed the thought that somebody cared for her, even if it was poor Dan. She was at his bedside yesterday, down in the long, low

house at the end of Dean's Lane, where they had brought him home from the Yellow Jacket. She had heard of it all at once — that Job was dangerously sick at the ranch, and Dan was crippled for life at the lane. She wanted to go to Job. Her eyes filled as they told her of his heroism. What a brave fellow! She brushed away the dust from the secret shrine in her heart and worshiped him anew.

She wanted to go to him. But what would he say? How forward, how unwomanly it would seem! Did he ever think of her? Ah! sometimes she thought so! But he was beyond her now; she could not go to him. But Dan would expect it. Poor Dan! He needed somebody to say a kind word. So she had gone. She had bathed his aching head; she had told him she was praying for him; she had left with him the blossoms picked at her door.

Dan or Job — which should it be? In the doorway she stood dreaming till the sun was between the tree-tops, and looked straight down the trail. All day at her tasks she dreamed on. Twice she took her bonnet and thought she would go to Job; then she hung it away again. There they stood at the doorway of her soul — Dan, crippled, helpless, selfish; a poor, wild, wandering boy. Job, strong, brave, the soul of honor, the manliest of men, a Christian in all that word means in a young man's life — her ideal.

There they stood on the threshold of her heart; and, lingering at sundown in the same old doorway, the tears filling her eyes, she took them both in — Dan to pity, comfort, cheer; Job to honor and to love. Job was hers; perhaps he would never know it, but that day she gave him the best a woman has — her first love.

CHAPTER XX.

ACROSS THE MONTHS.

THE next two years came and went in Grizzly county without any events to be chronicled in the city press — no strikes or rich finds or stirring deeds; yet they were years that counted much in some lives.

Job went back to the mines, no longer behind the pay window, but as assistant superintendent. Never had so young a man had so responsible a place at the Yellow Jacket. The negotiations and intercourse with the outside world, and the complicated plans of a great company, were not his task. He was the soul of the mine. His it was to deal with the "hands," and stand between them and that intangible, soulless thing men call a corporation. He was the prophet of the company and priest pleading the needs of five hundred men at the doors of the directors. There was nothing in the laws of the company defining his position, and he could hardly have defined it himself. He only knew that he was there to make life a little brighter, home a little more sacred, the friction of business a little less, the higher part of manhood more valuable, to five hundred hard-working men of all creeds and races that lived on the bare mountain-side about the Yellow Jacket mine.

It was marvelous the changes that came. Personal influence and social power told as the days went by. The saloon-keepers felt it and grumbled, but the assistant superintendent was too great a favorite for them to dare say much. The Sunday work ceased. Every improvement for bettering the conditions under which the men worked was put in — better air-pumps; a large shaft-house with dressing-rooms for the men, to save them from going out while heated, to be exposed to winter's cold; a hospital for the sick; lower prices at the company's store; Finnegan's saloon enlarged and fitted up as a temperance club-house, with not a drop of liquor, but plenty of good cheer. More

than once on Sundays Job talked to the men on eternal themes, from a spot where, on a never-to-be-forgotten Sunday, he had once faced a mob.

At last the company built a large, plain, attractive church, and the miners insisted on Job's being the "parson." But he firmly declined the honor. Yet he had his say about that church. He felt a wee bit of pride when, crowded to the doors with Scandinavians, Irishmen, Mongolians, Englishmen and Americans, with the Mexican and stalwart Indian not left out, he saw the preacher on the Frost Creek circuit and the priest from Gold City ascend the pulpit to dedicate it. It was to be for all faiths that point heavenward, all ethics that teach the mastery of self, all creeds that exalt Jesus Christ, all religions that really bind back to God. The company had said it; and the men knew that that meant Job.

It was a strange service. The Catholic choir sang "Adeste Fideles," and they all bowed and said the prayer of prayers. Some said "Our Father" and some "Paternoster," and they all meant the same. Job felt a strange thrill in his soul as all in the great audience joined in the last reverent "Amen." Both clergymen spoke, and when the preacher named the Savior, the Catholics crossed themselves; and when the priest said "Blessed Jesus," the Methodists responded "Amen." Both men caught the spirit of the hour; bigotry, creeds, conventionalities, were forgotten. They were face to face with hungry souls; with men who knew little of theology and ecclesiasticism, but much of actual life. God, sin, manhood, eternity, seemed very real to those speakers that day, and they made it plain to the tear-stained, sin-scarred faces that looked into theirs. When at last it was over and the priest had said "Dominus vobiscum" and the parson said "amen," Job slipped out of the rear door to escape the crowd and to pray for the Yellow Jacket and its five hundred men, while a voice whispered to his soul, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

These years had made great changes in Andrew Malden. Since that night-watch at Pine Tree Ranch, he had been a different man. Tony and Hans felt it; the mill men commented on it; the world of Gold City began to realize that the master of Pine Tree Mountain possessed a heart. The old town had more public spirit than for years, and everybody knew that it was "Judge" Malden, inspired by a life close to his own, who was back of all the improvements. But not everybody was pleased with his influence in public matters, and when the Board of Supervisors one spring refused to renew the license of the Monte Carlo, and passed an ordinance against gambling, all the baser element in Gold City united in bitter hatred against the one who they knew possessed the political power that brought these things to pass.

From that day Grizzly county saw an immense struggle for supremacy between righteousness and vice, in the persons of the two political leaders, Andrew Malden and "Col. Dick." Col. Dick was the most clerical-looking man in the community. Always dressed in immaculate white shirt, long coat and white tie, with his smooth face and piercing black eyes, no stranger would have dreamed, as he received his polite bow on the street, that this was the most notorious character in Grizzly county, the manipulator of its politics, the proprietor of its worst haunt, the most heartless man who ever stood behind a bar in a mining camp. But Richard Lamar — or, as all familiarly knew him, Col. Dick, in honor of his traditional war record — was all this. For nearly twenty years he had stood coolly behind that bar mixing drinks and planning politics. All men feared him. Only one man ever refused to drink with him, so far as is known, and then everybody who could, steered clear of jury duty on that case, and those who could not escape pronounced his death due to heart-failure.

The election the next year was the most hotly contested ever held in the county. Job used all the personal influence he had in the Yellow Jacket; Andrew Malden himself personally canvassed every house in the county where there was the slightest hope. Tony said, "Bress de Lawd! guess de old Marse and de gray team done gone de rounds, an' ebery dog in de county knows 'em!"

Dan, poor Dan, limping through the crowd on crutches, was Col. Dick's chief lieutenant, and used with the utmost shrewdness the "cash" which the saloon interest placed at his disposal. He knew by election day the price of every salable vote in the county. The night before election excitement ran high; a scurrilous sheet came out with cartoons of Andrew Malden and "Gambler Teale's kid." All the hard things that could be said were said. That night, before an audience that filled the old church and hung on the windows and packed the steps, Job made a speech which thrilled the souls of them all. He told his life story; told of what rum had done for him and his, told of Yankee Sam and the scene at his death, till hardened men wiped away the tears. No cut-and-dried temperance lecture was his. He talked of life as all knew it, of Gold City and facts no one could deny; talked till waves of deepest emotion passed over the crowd like the wind over grain on the far-reaching prairies. The meeting broke up with cheers and hisses, and men went out to face a fight at the polls that was talked of for many a long day afterward.

The ringing of the old church bell at dark on election day, the cheers sounding everywhere up and down the streets, the sour, scowling faces of Col. Dick and Dan as they slunk down the alley and in back of the Monte Carlo, told a story which thrilled the hearts of good citizens — that righteousness and good government had won.

That night, between midnight and dawn, Andrew Malden's lumber mill went up in flame and smoke. Who did it? No one knew; no one doubted. The north wind was blowing, and the mill hands worked vigorously, worked heroically — it meant bread and butter to them — but they could not save it. Only great heaps of ashes, twisted iron, a lone smoke-stack and great piles of ruined machinery, were left to tell the story, where for many years the whirl of industry had made music beside Pine Tree Creek.

Yet the man who had once sworn to shoot his enemy at sight uttered no complaint or showed the least spirit of revenge. He came and stood in the night air and watched the flames lick up the old mill, stood with the ruddy glow lighting up his furrowed face, and with never a word turned and went home.

Dan was drifting further and further into the downward life; and yet, strange to say, it had lost its charm for him. That night when the election failed and Col. Dick scored him for not doing his best, he parted company with the Colonel and the Monte Carlo. More and more strongly two passions ruled his life. One was love for Jane Reed; the love of a man conscious of his own utter badness for that holy life he secretly envies and outwardly scorns. The other was hatred for Job Malden, who, ever since he came upon the stage in the long ago, had stood between Daniel Dean and all his ambitions.

So the world moved on, the world of Grizzly county, hid away among the grand old mountains and lofty pines of the Sierras. Impulses were passing into deeds; actions and thoughts were crystallizing into character — character that should endure when the pines had passed into dust, when the mountains had tottered beneath the hand of the Creator, when earth itself had sunk into endless space and the story of Gold City had forever ended.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE YOSEMITE.

"WELL, Bess, old girl, we're off now for the jolliest time out!" cried Job as he vaulted into the saddle one June day, bound for the Yosemite Valley, that wonderful spot of which Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote on the old hotel register: "The only place I ever saw that came up to the brag."

Job had left the Yellow Jacket forever. The years were beginning to tell on the strong man of Pine Tree Mountain and Job was needed at home. So he had come. Standing one night on Lookout Point, watching the setting sun gild the far-off crown of El Capitan, he had resolved that before its glow once more set on the monarch's brow, he would mount Bess and be off to see again the sights on which old El Capitan had looked down for innumerable centuries. Perhaps the knowledge that Jane was there camping with her invalid father, who fancied that a summer in the valley would make his life easier, had something to do with the decision.

It was on one of those beautiful mornings in the California mountains which come so often and yet are always a rare, glad surprise, that Job, mounted on Bess, went singing down through the pasture gate, down past the charred ruins of the mill, past the familiar entrance to Dean's Lane, on toward the Frost Creek road and Wawona. It was a very familiar road. He stopped so long to chat with Aunty Perkins, halted Bess so long under the big live-oak at the Frost Creek school, and, leaning on her neck, gazed wistfully at the scenes of many a boyhood prank, that it was late in the afternoon when he passed the spot fragrant with memories of "Aunt Eliza" and "Mary Jane," galloped down the long hill, raced the coach and six just in from Raymond with a lot of tourists up to the Wawona Hotel, sprang off Bess, turned her over to a hostler and went into the office to register for the night.

That load of tourists furnished ample amusement for Job all that summer evening. He had read of such people, but this was the first time he had ever met them. There was the fat man, jovial and happy, always cracking a joke, who shook the dust off what had been that morning, before he began a ride of more than forty miles by stage, a respectable coat, and laughed merrily till it nearly choked him. There was the tall dude, with wilted high collar and monocle on his right eye, drawling about this "Bloomin' dirty country, don'cher know." Striding up and down the veranda with a regular tread that shook the long porch, with clerical coat buttoned up to the throat, and high silk hat which was not made for stage travel, was Bishop Bowne. His temper seemed unruffled by the vexations of the day as he remarked, "Magnificent scenery. Makes me think of Lake Como, only lacks the lake. Regular amphitheater of mountains. Reminds one of the Psalmist's description of Jerusalem." Darting here and there, trying to get snap-shots, were two "kodak fiends," two city girls who pointed the thing at you, bungled over it, reset it, pressed the button, and giggled as they flew off. They fairly bubbled over with delight as they saw Job, and debated how much to offer to get him to sit for a scene of rustic simplicity out by the toll-gate.

But Job was too busy to notice. He was being systematically interviewed by the fat, fussy woman in black who was asking him, "S'pose you've seen Pike's Peak, the Garden of the Gods, and Colorado Springs? Great place; we spent a whole half day there. No? Been to Monterey, of course, round the drive? We did it! Foggy, couldn't see a blessed thing; but it's fine; had to do it. What! never been there? Too bad, young man. Oh, there's nothing like doing the world. I've seen Paris, Rome, the Alps, Egypt. Oh, my! I couldn't tell how much! Sarah Bell, she knows; she's got it down in her note-book. Dear me! I must go and see what time we can start back for

this place over there — what do you call it? Some Cemet'ry?"

"Yosemite," suggested Job.

"Oh, yes, Yosemitry. We ought to go right back to-morrow. We've got to do Alaska in this trip, or we'll never hear the end of it when we get back East. Nothing like doing the world, young man," said she, as she adjusted her bonnet and eye-glasses and hurried off to the office, where he heard her an hour later lamenting, "Sarah Bell, we have got to stay a whole precious day in that Cemet'ry before we can go back!"

It was late when the babble of voices died away, the stars kept watch through the tall pines of Wawona, and Job fell asleep to the piping of the frogs in the pond back of the hotel and the pawing of horses in the long barn across the square.

Yosemite Valley, from Inspiration Point.

"Inspiration Point!" called out the driver, as Job pulled up Bess the next day alongside the stage as it stood on the summit of that spot where the road from Wawona, which for miles has climbed up through the forest past Chinquapin and many a stage station, climbs still higher through the rare air of seven thousand feet, and then hurries down through the leaves of the trees, turns a bend and emerges in full view of the grand Yosemite.

There it lay in all its grandeur — the unroofed temple of God, Nature's great cathedral. Three thousand feet down, level as the floor, sunk beneath the surrounding mountains which stretched away to right and left in a gigantic mass, it lay clothed in a carpet of green grass and trees so far below that they seem to merge into one. Cut by a silvery stream that winds lazily amid the Edenic beauty, as if loath to be away, the valley a mile wide stretches back for nearly six miles, and then is lost to view as it wanders around the jutting peaks of the Three Sisters and climbs on for five more miles to the falls of the Merced, as they come tumbling down from the region of perpetual snow to that of perpetual beauty.

To the left is old El Capitan, three thousand feet high, and with width equal to height and depth to width — a mountain of solid rock. Well did the Bishop lift his hat, and, standing in silent awe, at last say, "The judgment throne of God." Far beyond it the silvery line of the Yosemite Creek reached the straight edge of the cliff and shot down twenty-six hundred feet. To the right, Bridal Veil Falls, a tiny brooklet it seemed in the distance, winding down a mountain meadow, looking frightened a moment at the edge of the cliff, leaping over into spray, caught up and transfigured by

the afternoon sun, as it fell on the rocks hundreds of feet below. Beyond it, Cathedral Rocks, the Three Sisters and a mass of jutting summits stretching ever on till they were lost to view. Beyond and between them all, between and back, El Capitan and the Sentinel Peak, looming up, as the Bishop said, like "the sounding-board of the ages." From far away rose the Half Dome, at whose feet the famous little lake mirrors again and again the morning sun as it drives away the shadows of night from this home of the sublime.

Job instinctively bared his head and found himself repeating, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God."

Just then the silence was broken by the voices in the stage. "Ain't it pretty?" said the giggler. "Well, now, is that the Cem-et'ry? Do tell! Driver, you're sure we can go back to-day? We've seen it now!" said the fussy woman. The practical man was asking the driver for minute statistics and copying them down in his book, the dude was yawning and hoping there would be a dance at the hotel, while the Bishop got out and, walking away from the rest, stood and looked and looked and looked, till Job heard him intoning in a voice in keeping with the grandeur of the scene, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."

Job stayed behind as the stage rattled down the side of the mountain, tethered Bess by a big cedar, lay in a grassy nook and looked down, down, where the Merced abutted the base of El Capitan and tumbled down the narrow cañon that leads from the valley far below to the plains. All the reverence of his soul, all that was noble and lofty in him, rose as he gazed upon the scene. The littlenesses, the meannesses of the world, were left far behind. Like Moses of old, he was in the cleft of the mountains and the glory of Jehovah lay stretched out before him.

It was toward sunset when he reached the floor of the valley and walked Bess across the three bridges that span the branches of the Bridal Veil Creek, saw the bow of promise in the misty spray that seemed to ever hang in mid-air against the cliffs, galloped down the Long Meadow, past the Valley Chapel, and pulled up at the Sentinel House for the night.

That night the silver gleam of the Yosemite itself looked in at his window, as the new moon shone on its waters falling from the endless heights above, and the ripple of those waters soothed him to sleep as they rolled past his door, under the bridge and away down the valley.

In a most romantic little spot just across the bridge near the Falls of the Yosemite, and where the icy creek hides itself in bushes and reappears under the bridge, stood an abandoned Indian wick-i-up, half hid among the saplings. Here, throwing flap-jacks into the air with a toss over a crackling camp-fire, singing merrily, Job found Jane the next morning as he was roaming the valley in the early hours on Bess' back. It was a genuine surprise. She was not expecting him, even if she had dreamed of him all night. Her first impulse was to express with childish glee her real delight, but her very joy made her reserved. She restrained herself lest she should display her real feelings. She was glad to see him, of course; her father was better, and was off getting wood for the fire. Were the folks all well? Had he seen Dan lately? (Which question cut Job deeper that he liked to acknowledge.) Would she go up to Mirror Lake after breakfast? he asked. Certainly, if father did not need her.

So a little later, leaving Bess neighing behind in the camp, up the long, dusty road Jane and Job rambled on, past the pasture and the Royal Arches, on along the river bank, and, turning away to the left, climbed on the rise of ground into that nook where the South Dome seems almost to

meet the Half Dome, and stood by the glassy waters of Mirror Lake. In that early hour before the ripples had stirred the surface, this lakelet at the foot of the Half Dome was worthy of all its romantic fame. Nine times that morning Job and Jane saw the sun rise over the rounded peak of the Half Dome, as they followed slowly the shores of the lake from sun-kissed beach to shadow. Jane went into ecstasies. Was it not beautiful! What a picture! The clear-cut rocky mountain, its low edges fringed with trees, its top so bare, the blue sky and passing clouds, that bright spot which rose so quickly far back of the topmost turn of the Dome, all mirrored at their feet.

Job's esthetic nature was stirred to its depths, and he echoed Jane's adjectives. Before they reached camp she had yielded to his appeal for another walk to-morrow, perhaps to Glacier Point and home by moonlight.

That night Job took his blankets from the hotel and stole over back of the Reeds' camp, just beyond the Indian's "cache" on the gentle slope of the open valley where the great wall of Eagle Peak rises four thousand feet. Among a lot of boulders which look for all the world like tents in the twilight, there, between two great pines, he lay down to watch the moonlight fade from Glacier Point yonder across the valley, and fell asleep at last to dream of the Berkshire Hills, the winding Connecticut, and the scenes of childhood days.

It must have been three o'clock — it was dark, very dark, though the stars were shining brightly — when something awoke him. He roused to find himself striking his nose on either side in a strange manner. Fully awake, he discovered the cause. Two tribes of ants living on opposite pine trees had completed a real estate bargain that night and had decided to change homes. By some chance they found his face in their pathway, but, perfectly fearless of the giant sleeping there, had kept on their journey, passing each other on the bridge of his nose.

Mirror Lake, Yosemite.

As he woke, the tramp of myriad feet crossed that feature, the procession for the right marching over between his eyes; the procession for the left, over the point. Silently, boldly, the mighty host climbed his cheeks, surmounted the pass, and hurried down, till, with many a desperate slap, Job at last sprang up, thoroughly awake. Ants, ants, ants — millions of them! Ants in his shoes, ants running off with his hat, ants in his pockets. It was an hour before the giant had conquered the dwarfs and Job was asleep again, well out of the way of any tree.

The sun was shining in his eyes, the In-

dian's little black cur had come up and was barking at him from a respectful distance, and from behind a tree Job heard a girl's merry laugh, when he awoke the next morning.

CHAPTER XXII.

GLACIER POINT.

MOUNTAINS, mountains, mountains! Piled up like Titanic boulders, snow-capped and ice-bound, tumbling down from the far-off glassy sides of Mt. Lyell and Mt. Dana to the edge of that stupendous chasm. Gleaming glaciers, great ice rivers, eternal snow drifts, dark, bare, rugged peaks for a background. For a foreground, all the beauty of the valley far below you, three thousand feet or more, as, holding your breath, you gaze straight down the dizzy height from the projecting table rock. El Capitan on the left, the Yosemite Falls dancing down in three great leaps opposite; the Half Dome and Cloud's Rest off to the right, Vernal and Nevada Falls pouring their torrent over the cliffs at your side, the Hetchy-Hetchy Valley, the rolling plateau that stretches back to the perpetual snow and rising peaks behind you. All language falters here. Tongue can never describe, only the soul feels, the awfulness, the vastness, the sublimity, the stupendousness, the wild grandeur of the scene. Such is Glacier Point.

Here, speechless, overawed, and with the loftiest emotions sweeping over their souls, Job Malden and Jane Reed stood alone amid a silence broken only by the sighing of the trees back of them.

It was toward sunset of a June afternoon. For hours they had been climbing up the long, steep, winding trail that picks its way along the side of the cliff from back of the Valley Chapel toward Sentinel Peak, over the jutting point, and over the cliff's edge to this wonderful spot. Weary and foot-sore, they had reached it, only to have all thought of self overwhelmed and forgotten in that vision of visions which burst upon their eyes and souls. How long they stood there in utter silence they knew not. Time was lost in eternity. At last the tears began to trickle down Jane's cheeks and she sobbed, "It is grand, it is too grand! I have seen God! I cannot look any more!" while Job stood entranced, forgetful of Jane, forgetful of self, utterly absorbed in the consciousness of infinite power. Then he began to repeat in a solemn voice that favorite Psalm of his: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."

The saucy call of a squirrel in a tall pine near, the chill of the evening air coming down from the ice-fields, brought them at last to a consciousness of themselves. Withdrawing to a sheltered nook away from the dizzy cliff, and so hid among the trees that all view was shut off except that scene of dazzling beauty, the glitter of the setting sun on the distant Lyell glacier, Job and Jane sat down for the first real heart-to-heart talk they had ever known in their lives. They talked of the years gone by; of the outward story that the world may read, of the inner story that only the heart knows. Their theme was Christ, their mutual Friend, who had been the cheer and strength of all those years. Memory came and turned the pages of a lifetime that night. Jane talked of childhood days, of her mother's grave and Blackberry Valley, and of the old camp-meeting in Pete Wilkins' barn on that never-to-be-forgotten Saturday night, when, lonely and heart-broken, she had knelt on the hard floor at the bench and whispered, "Just as I am, without one plea." Then her face brightened as she looked up and said, "Oh, Job, He came, and I was so happy! And, somehow, home has not been so lonely since then, and — I don't know; it may seem strange to you, Job — Jesus is just as real to me as you are. He is with me all the time; and, when

I am tired, he says, 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest'; when father is so cross, and the tears just will come, he whispers, 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. My peace I give unto you.' And he does. It comes so sweetly, and I feel so still, so rested! I know he is right beside me. Isn't it grand, Job, to feel we are His and He will always love us, and that He is so near us? It seems as if I heard His step now and He was standing by us. I know He is. I like that hymn we sang Communion Sunday—'Fade, fade, each earthly joy, Jesus is mine.'"

View from Glacier Point.

A moment they sat in silence, while the sun transformed the far-off glacier into a lake of glory, and then sank behind El Capitan for the night. Then Job spoke. A long while he talked. The memories of childhood; the sweet face that grew strangely white in the city of the plains and left him; the early days at Pine Tree Ranch; the steps of a downward life; that grand old camp-meeting and what it did for him — of these he spoke, and yet did not cease. The years of youth and young manhood, the bitter persecutions and temptations, the triumphs through the personal presence and help of the Master, were his theme. For the first time a human friend learned the real story of that awful night in the second tunnel and the long, long day in the lonely Gulch. The young man grew excited and stood up as he paid loving tribute to the reality of religion in his life and the tender, most divine friendship of Jesus Christ. Then he hesitated; but only for a moment. He told her of his sins; of those days of doubt when he yielded to the tempter's power and how near he came to losing his soul. He could not finish it, but strode off alone. At last he came, and, sitting down, said:

"Jane, all I am I owe to Jesus Christ. The story of his love, and what he has been to me, is more wonderful than any story of fiction. 'More wonderful it seems than all the golden fancies of all our golden dreams.'"

The twilight was deepening, the great mountains were fading away in the distance, the evening star was just peering over the horizon as, standing together by the iron rail that protects Table Rock — standing, as it seemed, in the choir loft of the eternities, they sang together — Job in his rich tenor, Jane in her sweet soprano:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name,
Let angels prostrate fall.
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

As the moonlight stole down from the mountain summits to the edge of the further

cliff and then plunged down to light the valley, Job and Jane still sat and talked. Was it strange that somehow the hidden love of long years would out that night, and, talking of life's holiest experiences and secret longings and loftiest dreams, somehow, before they knew it, they talked of love? Secrets locked in the heart's deepest chambers found voice that night. The unuttered longings of the years found language. Not as children prattle of sudden impulses, not as Job had blushed and simpered once; but with the consciousness of manhood and womanhood, and divinity within, they talked of how their lives had grown together till, in all that is holy and best, they were already one.

At last they started down the trail. It was late. The moon had crossed the sky dome of the valley and was hastening toward Eagle Peak. A peace and silence that could be felt filled the world, and found a deep response in their souls. They were going down from the Mount of Transfiguration, one with God, one with each other. Love, pure and holy, was master of their lives. A joy unspeakable filled their hearts. The culmination of the years had come. With the forests and mountains for witness, under the evening sky, with innumerable worlds looking down, with the presence of Infinite Power all about them. Jane Reed and Job Malden had, once for all, plighted their love to God and each other.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CANON TRAIL.

IT WAS just four days later, the day before the Fourth, that Job, mounted on Bess, rode up to Camp Comfort, as Jane called the little spot where she kept house in the open air for her father, listening to the roar of the Yosemite Falls back of her, and prepared their humble meals over the camp-fire. Job was going home; the old man would expect him on the Fourth, and that keen sense of duty which was ever stronger than his longing to linger near Jane, impelled him to go. He had come to say good-by. Old Tom Reed, sick and selfish, had been blind to the new light in Jane's eyes and did not know the secret which the birds and trees and sky had learned and seemed never to cease whispering about to Jane. He did not like Job. That pride of poverty which hates success put a gulf between him and this noble young fellow, who looked so manly as he rode up on Bess. Tom Reed liked Dan and thought, of course, that matters were settled between him and his black-eyed daughter. He felt to-day like telling this young aristocrat from the Pine Tree Ranch that it would be agreeable to both himself and Jane if he would seek other company. Only physical weakness kept him from following as Jane walked away by Job's side patting Bess' neck. She would see him to the end of the valley, she said; she did not mind the walk. Well, if she would — and what did Job want better than that? — she must mount Bess and let him walk. How pretty she looked on Bess' black back, with her shining hair and flashing eyes and ruddy cheeks! Never had she looked handsomer to Job. Close at her side he kept as Bess slowly walked down across the river bridge, past the Sentinel House, and on close to the Bridal Veil Falls.

As the rainbow in the spray, with its iridescent colors, laughed at them through the trees, Job thought of the gala day coming, when he should claim this noble girl for his bride, and an honest pride filled his heart. At the foot of Inspiration Point they tarried for a full hour, it was so hard to say good-by. How he hated to take Bess from her! At last a sudden thought came to him. She should keep Bess in the valley till the autumn days came and Jane could return home. He would go back over the Merced Cañon trail, only twenty-six miles to his home; he had often wanted to try it and cross the river on Ward's cable. He could

not go that way on horseback, and he would leave Bess. He would like to think of Jane and her as together. The girl protested, but she felt a secret joy. It would be next to having him. So she did not dismount, but through her tears saw Job vanish down the cañon, along the Rapids, towards the old, almost forgotten trail that leads for twenty miles by the river's roaring torrent, to where the South Fork joins the North Fork.

A sudden impulse seized her. She turned Bess' head toward the toll road and began to climb the steep three miles to Inspiration Point. Then she hunted for the Cliff Trail that leads away from the road out along the great left precipice of the cañon. She knew there must be some opening in the forest over there. She remembered it from the valley below, the day she had gone down by the Rapids. She would find it and catch one last glimpse of Job on the trail. She would wave to him, and perhaps he would see her. She had Bess, and it would not take long to return; father would not miss her.

Just as she turned into the trail a campers' wagon climbed the hill back of her and passed on over the road, but she did not notice it, she was so absorbed in her own thoughts. She must hurry. Would Job see her? Anyway she would surely see him — she would dismount and creep out to where nothing could hide her view.

Far below Job was already on his march homeward. With a swinging gait, and a determined will that said he must do it, though all the love in his heart said no, Job started off through the trees and on down the cañon trail. His eyes were misty and a lump was in his throat, as he caught one last glimpse of Jane. On he hurried. He was off now, and the sooner he got home the better. By rapid walking and some hard climbing he would reach Indian Bill's old cabin, ten miles down the river, by night.

He had just resolved on this, leaped over a creek stealing down far behind El Capitan, got full in sight of the roaring rapids, when he heard a step behind him and looked up to see Indian Bill himself coming. The old trapper was a well-known character in the mountains. His great brown feet looking out beneath torn blue overalls, his dark-skinned chest wrapped in a blanket of many colors, his long straight hair falling from beneath a well-worn sombrero, formed a familiar sight all over those mountains. Those feet had tramped every mountain pass and rugged trail and had climbed every lofty peak for a hundred miles about the Yosemite.

His approach was a glad surprise to Job. He could wish no better companion over that lonely trail which led along the precipitous sides of the cañon, with straight walls towering above it and steep descents reaching below to the Merced's angry waters, which dash for twenty miles over gigantic boulders with a fury unrivaled by Niagara itself.

Soon Indian Bill was driving away Job's gloom as, in his queer dialect, he told one of his trapper stories while the two swung on at regular gait, close upon each other's heels. Over the steep grades, through the deep, shaded ravines, and along the bare cliffs on that narrow trail, they went. They had gone a mile down the stream, when Job noticed something moving, high on the opposite cliff. He called his companion's attention to it, and the keen-eyed Indian said it was a horseman mounted on a black steed. Job thought of Jane, but at once said to himself that it could not be she — she was back at Camp Comfort by this time. A little later, Bill said the horse was now riderless and standing by a tree, and that a bit of something white was moving on the face of the cliff.

Just then they heard a terrible roar, and both forgot all else in the queer sensation that seized them. All the world seemed to sway before Job's eyes. The mountains below, where the river bends, seemed a thing of life. His feet slipped on the narrow edge

of a steep cliff he was crossing, the gravel beneath gave way, and Job found himself lying at the foot of a steep incline, while a whole fusillade of stones was flying past him. A moment, and it was over, and the Indian said:

"Ugh! Heap big earthquake! Great Spirit mad! Come."

But Job could not easily come. His foot was doubled up under him and sharp pains were darting through it. Indian Bill sprang to his assistance, fairly carried him up the steep side of the precipice, from whence, fortunately for him, he had fallen on soft earth, and put him on his feet on the trail. Oh, that long walk over the jutting points, down among the boulders, and up again on places of the trail that seemed suspended between earth and sky! Every step brought a groan to Job's lips. He grew feverish and thirsty. Bill parted a bunch of almost tropical ferns which grew against the rocks, and led Job in to a place where, through the stone roof of a dark cañon, the ice-cold water trickled down drop by drop. It was well toward dusk when Job dropped exhausted on the trail, and the hardy Indian slung him over his shoulder, bore him up a narrow cañon that entered the main gorge on the right, and laid him down on his own blankets in the little wick-i-up made of twisted limbs and twigs that he called home. Soon the crackling fire warmed the water, the sprained foot was bandaged, and Job was asleep.

It was a strange scene on which Job opened his eyes the next morning. He was lying on a bed of cedar boughs, wrapped in an old gray blanket, and with one of many colors under him. A roof of gray and green was over him, the forest's foliage woven into a tent. Through the parted branches he could see the brown-skinned Indian bending over a ruddy fire from whence the savory odor of frying trout stole in. Through an avenue of green down the narrow cañon, he could see the morning sun shining on the waters of the Merced which tumbled over the great rocks. He tried to rise, but a sharp pain shot through his foot. Far away he heard the call of a bird, and out by the fire the weird strains of a monotonous folk-song rose in the air. Job closed his eyes and sent up a morning prayer. In it he tried to pray for Jane, but somehow could not. She was safe, he knew; probably at the fire, too, in the beautiful valley from whence those rushing waters came.

The trout breakfast was over — Bill knew where to get the beauties, and, after he had got them, knew how to cook them — when Job learned from the old trapper that he was to be his guest for a week; that not before then would he be able to continue the journey home, and that Bill would do his best to care for him till the sprained foot was well again. At first he rebelled. He must get home, he said; Andrew Malden was expecting him. But the Indian only grunted and sat in silence, as Job tried to walk and fell back upon the blankets with the realization that Bill was right.

All day the Indian pottered about in silence, fixing his traps and guns, and weaving a pair of moccasins for winter's use, while Job lay half asleep, half awake, living over again the glories of the week just closing. Toward evening the old Indian came in and sat by his guest and began to talk. Far into the night hours, while the camp-fire flashed and crackled without, he kept up his stories, till Job, intensely interested, forgot his pains and his dreams. In quaint English, shorn of all unnecessary words, Bill talked on.

First he told bear stories, finishing each thrilling passage with a significant "Ugh!" The one that roused Job most and held him transfixed was of once when he suddenly met, coming out of the forest, a giant grizzly, which rose on his monster hind feet and advanced for the death embrace. "Me fire gun heap quick, kill him all dead, he fall, hit Bill, arm all torn, blood come, me sick. Ugh!" And turning back his blanket, he

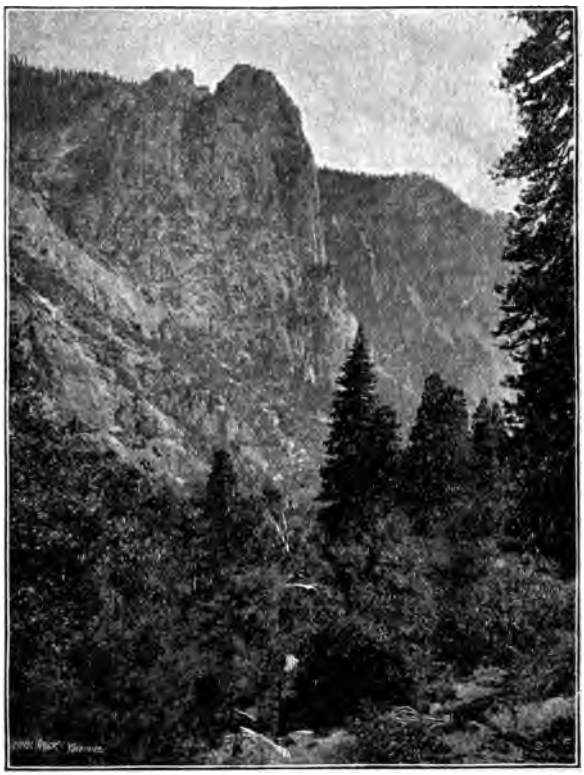
showed Job the scars from the grizzly's dying blow.

Then he told tales of adventure. Of scaling the Half Dome by means of the iron pegs some daring climber had left there, and how finally, reaching the summit and lying flat, he peered over and saw himself mirrored in the lake below. He told of a wild ride down the icy slope of the Lyell Glacier; of a night, storm-bound, in the Hetchy-Hetchy, where he slept under the shelter of a limb drooping beneath the snow, with a group of frightened mountain birds for bedfellows. He told of beautiful parks far amid the solitude of the high Sierras, great mountain meadows where shy deer grazed, of crystal lakes that lay embowered in many a hidden mountain spot, of Mount Ritter's grandeur and the dizzy heights of Mount Whitney, till Job's head reeled, and he fell asleep that night dreaming of standing on the jagged, topmost summit of a lofty peak, with all the mountains going round and round below him, till he grew dizzy and fell and fell — and found himself wide awake, listening to the hoot of a distant owl and the breathing of his tawny host stretched out under the sky by the dying embers of the camp-fire.

During the next two days Job was much alone. Bill came and went on many a secret, stealthy errand to where he knew the largest, most toothsome mountain trout had their home. Busy with his own thoughts, Job lay and dreamed the long hours away.

"Make Bill feel bad. Want hear it? Ugh! Me tell it; me there. No brave; little boy. Bad day, bad day!"

It was the fourth day and Job was trying to persuade Bill to tell him about the dreadful massacre of the Yosemite in the years gone by. The fitful firelight played about the solemn face which showed never a quiver as that night Bill told the story which made Job's blood run cold.



Sentinel Rock.

It was in the long-gone years when the miners first came into the mountains. Living quietly in the beautiful valley to which they had given their name, his tribe dwelt. Wild children of nature, they had for many a century had the freedom of those hills. Far and wide on many a hunting expedition they had roamed, and none had said nay. But the pale-face, the greedy pale-face, came and stole the forests and creeks you-

der. Twice, enraged at their depredations, the Indians had sallied forth from their homes and rent the hills about Gold City with their war-cries, then retreated to the mountain fastnesses of which the pale-face knew nothing. Once more they had gone on the war-path, and started back, to find the whites at their heels. To the very edge of the cliffs they had been followed, and their refuge was no longer a secret — the world had heard the story of the giant's chasm in the Sierras.

When they had gone up on the great meadows back of Yosemite Falls and El Capitan to live, there came a great temptation. The Mono Lake Indians, far over the pass, had stolen a lot of fine horses from the miners of Nevada. They hated the Mono Lake Indians. They watched their chance, and, while they were off on a great hunting trip, the Yosemites stole over the crest of the Sierras and brought a hundred head of horses back with them. Then the aged Indian went on without a tremor. He told how, one summer day, he was playing with the other boys around a great tree, when he heard the wild war-whoop of the Monos; he saw them coming in their war-paint, mounted on mad, rushing horses; heard the whirr of arrows about him; ran and hid in a cleft of the great rocky cliff, out of sight but not of seeing; saw his mother scalped and thrust back into the burning tepee and his father pushed headlong over the cliff; heard the death-cries of the Yosemites; saw the meadow bathed in blood; saw the end of the Yosemites; and crept down with a few survivors late that night to the valley and escaped to the whites. "'Bloody meadow,' white man call it. Him good name. Wish Mono come now — I kill! I kill!" and, with dramatic gesture that almost startled Job, the old man waved his arms and was silent.

Somehow after that the conversation drifted to religion. Bill talked of the Great Spirit, Job talked of God. The old story of the Incarnation — how this Great One came down to live among men and love us all — Job told as best he could, till the hard heart of the child of nature was touched, and he wanted to know if Job thought He loved poor Indian Bill. It was very late, when Job came back to the awful massacre, and tried to show Bill that the manly thing was not to cry, "I kill, I kill," but "I forgive."

The old man listened in silence. He walked out under the stars, then came back and sat down by Job's side and said, "Bill heap bad. Bill hate Mono Indian." Again and again he paced back and forth.

Job was almost asleep, weary with watching the heart-struggles of the wronged old man, when at last he came and said, "Boy, ask Great Spirit forgive Bill. Bill forgive Mono Indian." And there, at midnight, the love that transfigured Hebrew Peter, German Luther, English Wesley, that had changed Job Malden, transformed Indian Bill.

It was fully two weeks after the old trapper had borne him into his humble tent that one afternoon Job walked off, strong and brave, to finish his journey home. Bill saw him down to the river, where you swing across on a board hung on a cable, helped pull the return ropes that carry the novel car across, shouted as Job clambered up the other bank, "Bill heap glad! Love Mono! Love Job! Good-by!" and was off out of sight through the woods as swift and lithe as a deer, bound on another of his hunting trips far back of El Capitan.

Job saw him vanish; and, turning with a light heart and a merry song, climbed the ridge that separates the North Fork from the South Fork, fairly ran down past the old tunnels of the Cove Mine, skipped over the iron bridge, and began the steady climb of six miles home.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"GETHSEMANE."

IT WAS evening and Tony was carrying the milk from the barn to the milk-house, when Job tripped down the trail from Lookout Point, and Shot and Carlo ran barking to meet him. A sort of momentary consciousness that Bess was not there came to him, then something that sounded like her neigh reached his ears. A shout to Tony — who in his surprise dropped the milk pail and vanished — a bound, and Job was on the veranda. He pushed open the door, and stood face to face with Andrew Malden.

The old man's face was white and deeply furrowed. He looked ten years older than when Job had seen him last, and the young man felt a sharp pang of remorse to think he had left him. Then he remembered Jane and knew he would not have missed the trip for all the world.

At sight of him Andrew Malden's face grew still whiter, he started back as if shot, and fell in a faint on the couch. Job was appalled and greatly mystified, as he dashed water into the wrinkled, haggard face.

At last the old man's eyes opened and he whispered hoarsely, "Oh, Job! Job! how could you? Once I could have believed it, but I cannot now! Oh, Job, tell me! tell me all! I'll stand by you, though you did it — you're my boy still! Oh, Job, it is awful, awful! But I knew you would come! Oh, Job! oh, Job!" he moaned.

Did what? "Awful"? "Come"? Of course he had come. It was an accident, Job explained; he did not mean to stay away.

"An accident? Oh, yes, I told them so, Job; but they won't believe it. They are coming to take my boy and — oh, I can't stand it! I won't stand it!" and Andrew Malden tottered to and fro across the room.

Was the old man insane? Had something dreadful happened? Job stood, his face growing paler, his heart sinking with an undefined fear. Then he caught the words, "Jane — dead — you!" — words that made every nerve quiver, and tortured him till he sank on his knees and begged to know the worst.

Oh, the awful story! It burned into the depths of his soul. Now it seemed like a dream, now dreadful reality. Jane was dead. Somebody had found her lifeless and still on the rocks below the cliff just around from Inspiration Point, and Bess had come home riderless. All the country was wild with excitement. Everybody was searching for him. He had done it, they said. Tom Reed had seen him go away with her, and knew there was a quarrel on hand. Dan was telling that Jane had promised to marry him, and that Job had followed her to the valley to make her break the engagement or kill her. All the evidence was against Job. They had buried her from the old church, buried her in the cemetery on the hill, outside of whose gate his father lay. Yes, Jane was dead!

Job listened and listened — all else fell unheeded on his ear. Jane was dead, his Jane, and lay beneath the pines far down the Gold City road! It was all he heard — it was all he knew. He did not stop to explain; he heard Bess neigh again, and rushed out into the shadowy night, and mounted her with only a bridle. He heeded not the old man's cries. His brain was on fire, his soul in agony. Only one thing he knew — Jane was dead and he must go to her; go as fast as Bess could fly down that road which many a dark night she had traveled.

Men standing on the steps of the Miners' Home that evening said a dark ghost went by like a flash — it was too swift for a flesh-and-blood horse and rider — and they crept in by the bar and drank to quiet their fears.

He found it at last. The fresh earth, the uplifted pine cross with the one word "Jane" on it, told the story. He left Bess to roam among the white stones and the grass, flung himself across that mound, half hid by withered flowers, and lay as if dead — dead as she who slept beneath. At last

the sobs came; the tears mingled with the flowers; the heart of manhood was bleeding. Jane was dead! How had it happened? Who had done this awful thing? God or man, it mattered little to him. The dreadful fact that burned itself deeper and deeper into his soul was — Jane was dead!

Oh, that awful night! The stars forgot to shine; the trees moaned over his head; the lightnings played on yonder mountains. The thunders rolled, and he heeded them not; the rain-drops pattered now and then on the branches above, but he never knew it.

Gethsemane! Once it had seemed a strange, far-away place where the heart broke and the cup was drunk to its bitter dregs. Job had wondered what it meant. He knew now. It was here on the slopes of the Sierras. These pines were the gnarled olive trees, this was the garden of grief. Gethsemane — it had come into the life of Job Malden.

At length the first great storm of grief had spent itself, and he sat alone in the silence broken only by the far-off mutter of thunder; sat alone with his dead and his thoughts. Again, as on far Glacier Point, memory came and turned the pages of a lifetime. He was back in the old boyhood days, laughing at her dusty, tanned feet — he would kneel to kiss them now, if he could; again he was climbing Sugar Pine trail with her; he was following her and Dan out on that bitter winter night, maddened with jealousy and drink. Still the pages turned. He was kneeling by her side at the Communion table, and a voice said, "As oft as ye drink of this cup" — he was drinking of it now — the cup the Master drank in the garden's gloom. Then the sobs overcame him. Again he was still. The storm had spent its fury, the moon was struggling through the rifted clouds. He remembered Glacier Point and that immortal night, and he felt as if she was here and God was here, and he knelt and prayed, "Thy will, not mine, be done," and the angels of peace and rest came and ministered unto him.

From sheer exhaustion he finally slept. It was but the passing of a moment, and he was awake again. There in the moonlight he read, "Jane." Could he bear it? He could see her now saying good-by. Oh, it was forever, forever! Then, like a flash it came — forever? No; only a little span of life, and, at the gates of pearl, he would see her waiting to welcome him. She was there now, up where the stars were shining and the moon had parted the clouds. Her frail body was here perhaps — but Jane, his Jane, who that night at Glacier Point had said she loved him — she was there. He would be brave; he would be true to God; he would lean on the Master's arm. Jesus was left — he was with him here in the lonely graveyard, and Jane was his still for all eternity.

The young man looked up from the dark earth to the clear sky, and prayed a prayer of hope and trust and submission. Near the hour of dawn he walked out to the gate where Bess stood waiting. He mounted her — dear Bess! who alone knew the story of the awful tragedy. He patted her neck; he whispered his sorrow in her ear. And then a strange, wild thought came to him. He would not go back — he would go away to the great, outside world, never to see the mountains again. How could he ever climb Sugar Pine Hill, or go past the old schoolhouse, or enter the old church? He would go where no gleam from sun-kissed El Capitan could reach his eye, where no associations that would remind of a life forever past could haunt his soul.

Then he remembered something — it seemed like a nightmare. They had said he did it — how, when, why, he knew not. If he went away they would think he was afraid to face them, they would believe him guilty, and the old man would be broken-hearted. Job had forgotten him — he had forgotten all but his awful sorrow. What of it? Go anyway, his heart said. Go away from this world that has been full of trial after trial for you. No matter what men

think. God knows — God can take care of the old man.

There on Bess' back Job sat, while the bitter conflict within went on.

It was over at last. He turned Bess' steps toward Pine Mountain and home. He would face it all — the world's scorn, the old scenes which seemed each one to pierce anew his heart. He had been down to Gethsemane; he would climb Calvary.

CHAPTER XXV.

VIA DOLOROSA.

"I TELL you he'll come! Don't say that about my boy! It was an accident — he said so — I heard him! He can explain it all. He saw it! He'll come!" were the words Job heard Andrew Malden saying as he rode up to Pine Tree Ranch in the dim light of early morning. The sheriff and his deputy had come for Job; and, maddened to find him gone, were cursing the old man and the one they sought.

Andrew Malden, quivering with excitement, tortured by a thousand fears, wondering if he would come, was defending as best he could the young man whom he loved, in this awful hour, more than ever before.

Job was close beside them before they saw him. Hitching Bess, he walked up to the door, saluted the sheriff, and calmly asked:

"Were you looking for me?"

The sight of that pale, manly face for a moment stilled the bluster of the rough officer of the law, and he almost apologized as he told Job he was under the painful necessity of taking him to the county jail to answer to the charge of homicide — the murder of a girl named Jane Reed. Job winced under the sting of the words. For a moment he felt like striking the man a blow for mentioning that sacred name; then he bit his lip, sent up a silent prayer, and said:

"Very well, sir; I will mount my horse and follow you. I know the way well."

In a flash the burly sheriff whipped the hand-cuffs upon his wrists, and said:

"Ride! Well, I guess not! You'll play none of your games on me! You will ride between me and my deputy, Mr. Dean!" And then Job discovered for the first time that Marshall Dean was eying him with a malicious grin of satisfaction.

In a moment, seated in the buckboard between the two men, with only time for a good-by to Bess, a shake of the old man's hand, and never a moment to explain that the accident he had mentioned had befallen himself, not Jane, Job Malden rode down over the Pine Tree road, handcuffed, on his way to the county jail at Gold City.

Past the Miners' Home and the Palace Hotel they drove at last. Bitter faces glared into the prisoner's, friends of other days met him with silence, and here and there a voice cried, "Lynch him!" Up past the old church where he and Jane had gone and come together; up to the door of the quaint white court house with square tower and green blinds they drove, and Job passed through the rear door, and into the narrow, dark dungeon, with only, high up, a little iron-barred window to let in light and air — a prisoner of Grizzly county, to answer for the killing of Jane Reed.

Only when he heard the sound of the bolt in the door, heard the crowd outside cheering the sheriff for his bravery in capturing the outlaw, and, seated on the narrow cot, looked around the cheerless cell with no other furniture, did a sense of what it all meant rush over him. Then the hot tears came, his head sank between his hands, and he felt that he had taken the first step up Calvary. Like a far-off murmur there came to him the words he had said in his heart on that long-ago Communion Sunday:

"Where He leads me I will follow,
I'll go with Him all the way."

All the way? Ah, he was beginning to know what that meant! Then there came that other verse — how it soothed his troubled heart!

> "He will give me grace and glory,
> And go with me all the way."

Just then the sun stole in at the little cell window, and the perpendicular and horizontal bars made the shadow of a cross on the floor, all surrounded by a flood of light. A great peace came into Job Malden's heart, as the Master whispered, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

All Gold City was stirred to its depths. Nothing had happened in forty years to so move the hearts of men. Business was forgotten, groups of men met and talked long on the street corners, the mining camp was deserted. There was but one theme — the tragedy of Inspiration Point. Up at the Yellow Jacket a great shadow rested over office, church and the miners' shanties. On the lowest levels of the mines, grimy men looked into each other's faces and talked in an undertone of the awful fear which they would not have the rocks and the secret places of the earth know; that "the parson" was in a murderer's cell, and the storm clouds were gathering fast about him, and the worst was, he was guilty — it must be so!

The superintendent drove his team on a run to the court house, and offered any amount of bail. This was refused, and he was denied even a look at Job. Up at the ranch, Andrew Malden neither ate nor slept. A terrible nightmare hung over him. His boy was innocent, of course he was. But oh, it was awful! The saloons were crowded, and a furtive chuckle passed around the bars. He was caged now, the one they hated, and the evil element were in high glee. O'Donnell and Dan Dean, Col. Dick and the sheriff, were the center of crowds who hung on their words, as they told the story of the crime over and over with a new force and new aspect that showed the utter hypocrisy, treachery and sin of Job.

The church was crowded. The preacher could not believe Job guilty, but he dared not say so. Tom Reed, wild with grief, pleaded with men to break open the jail and let him slay the murderer, slay him and avenge his Jane — his black-eyed, great-hearted Jane. The city reporters were busy, and the papers glowed with accounts and photographs of "the awful wretch who was safely held behind the bars of the Gold City jail." So the storm surged to and fro, so the days passed, to that dark ninth of August when the trial was to begin.

Of all the throng of men in the mountains in those days, he alone who sat in the silence of a dungeon in the old court house, was unmoved and at peace. Through the long hours he sat recalling memories of past years, living again the scenes of yesterday, which seemed to belong to another world and another life now gone forever. From his pocket he drew again and again the little Testament still fragrant with a mother's dying kiss, and felt himself as much a homeless, motherless boy as upon that long-ago night when he first saw Gold City and fell asleep on the "Palace" doorsteps. He read it over and over. It was of Gethsemane, the Last Supper and Calvary he read most. He knew now what they meant. Then he turned to the words, "What shall separate us from the love of God?" and the consciousness that God was left, that Jesus was his, was like a mighty arm bearing him up.

They asked him for his defense. He said he had none, except the fact that he knew nothing about the deed. They scorned that, and asked whom he wished for a lawyer. He had no choice — cared for none. The judge sent him a young infidel attorney, the sheriff refused him the privilege of seeing anyone, the iron gate was double-barred, and closer and closer the web of evidence was drawn about him ready for the day of the trial.

He asked for Andrew Malden, but was refused. He begged them to send for Indian Bill; they made a pretense of doing so, but the trapper was far from human reach, far up in the wilderness beyond El Capitan. All Job could do was to pray and wait, little caring what the outcome might be, little caring what might be the verdict of the world of Gold City; knowing only two things — that Jane was dead and life could never be the same to him; and that the God who looked down in tender compassion on his child shut in between those dark stone walls, knew all about it. Job had read how one like unto an angel walked in the furnace of old with God's saints; he felt, now, that the Christ came and sat by his side in those lonely prison hours.

It was Monday, the ninth of August. The sun's rays beat down on the dusty streets of Gold City and glared from the white walls of the court house. At ten o'clock the trial would commence — the great trial of "The State vs. Job Teale Malden." The streets were thronged with vehicles; it was like one of the old-time Sunday picnics, only saint as well as sinner was here. The Yellow Jacket had closed down by common consent of all, and hundreds of workingmen were pouring into town in stages and buckboards, on horseback and on foot. The old court house was packed to its utmost capacity; the gallery and stairs were one mass of writhing humanity. Outside, they stood like a great encampment, stretching away, filling the whole square. Still they came from Mormon Bar and Wawona — the greatest throng in the history of Grizzly county; men, women, and children in arms — all to see Job Malden tried for his life.

Through this crowd, Andrew Malden, leaning on his cane, passed in at the great door by Tony's side. The crowd was silent as he passed. Some muttered under their breath; some lifted their hats. That worn, gaunt face startled them all. It was through this same crowd that Tom Reed, with darkened brow, and Dan Dean, limping on his crutches, passed in together.

The clock in the tower struck ten. Job in his cell heard it above the din of innumerable feet passing over his head; heard it and knelt in an earnest prayer for grace to bear whatever might come; to suffer and be still as his Master did of old. He had gone all over it again and again; they knew his story of the walk down the cañon trail with Indian Bill, but even the lawyer doubted it. If they knew of Glacier Point and the betrothal, they might believe him. Should he tell it? All night he had paced the cell wondering if he ought — if he could. As he knelt in that hour, he resolved that, though it would save his life, no human ear should ever hear that sacred secret. That hour on Glacier Point should be unveiled to no human eye, but remain locked in the chambers of his soul, known only to God and her who waited yonder for his coming.

It was near noon when the judge ascended the bench. The hubbub of voices ceased, the case was called, the rear door opened, and, led in by the sheriff, handcuffed and guarded, with calm, white face, yet never faltering in step or look, Job Malden walked across the floor to the prisoner's seat, while the crowd gazed in curiosity, that soon changed to awe and reverence, at that grave face, so deeply marked with scars of grief.

It was a strange scene that met Job's gaze. All the familiar faces were there — Aunty Perkins and Tim's father; Dean and O'Donnell glaring at him; poor old Andrew Malden leaning on his cane; Tony and Hans and Tom Reed and — oh, no! Jane was not there, but gone forever from Gold City and its strange, hard life. A tear stole down the prisoner's cheek — he wiped it away. His enemies saw it and winked. Tim's father saw it and moaned aloud. The clock struck twelve in the high tower, and proceedings began.

It was two days before the trial was well under way. The quibbling of the lawyers, the choosing of a jury, the hearing of the

witnesses who had found the wounded, silent form of Jane Reed on the rocks beneath the famous Point, filled the hours. Morning after morning, the scenes of that first day were repeated in the court room; the great crowds, the intense excitement, the friends and enemies intently listening to every word and watching every movement of the prisoner. And calm and still, with never a sign of fear or shame on his face, Job Malden sat in that court room hour after hour, and One unseen stood at his side.

On the third day the prosecution began to weave its web of circumstantial evidence about Job. How shrewd it was! How carefully each suspicious incident was told and retold! How meanly everything bad in his life was emphasized, everything good forgotten! They brought the tales of long-ago years when he was a mere boy. They proved that the passionate blood of a gambler was in his veins; that his father before him had shot a companion. The story of the horse-race and escapades of the reckless days of old were rehearsed by hosts of witnesses. It was proved, by an intricate line of cross-questions, that once before, on a bitter winter's night, young Malden had pursued this girl and Dan Dean with the avowed intention of harming them. The hot blood came to Job's face — he well remembered that night. Then he seemed to hear the distant voice of Indian Bill saying by the roaring Merced, "Bill forgive Mono Indian;" and, sitting there with this tale pouring into the ears of the throng who looked more and more askance at him, Job said deep in his soul, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Father, I forgive, I forgive!"

Closer and closer they drew the web. They made Andrew Malden — poor old man! — confess that he had heard Job say, "It was an accident," then showed that he had denied knowing aught of Jane's death until he reached home. Then Tom Reed took the stand. He testified that all Jane's preference was for Dan; that she went to him when he and Job were both so ill; that she wrote to Dan and never wrote to Job. The old man fairly shook with rage as on the witness-stand he took every chance to denounce the "hypocrite and 'ristocrat." Minutely he pictured Job's coming to the valley, the heated arguments he was sure the two had had, and how upon that awful day when Jane left him forever, she had walked away by the side of Job Malden.

Daniel Dean was the next witness. The crowd hung breathless on his words. Stumping up on his crutches, Dan took the chance of a lifetime to vent his hatred of Job. Keen, shrewd, too wise to speak out plainly, but wise enough to know the blighting influence of suggestion, Dan talked, insinuated and lied till the nails were driven one by one into poor Job's heart and the pain was almost more than he could bear. Insidiously, indirectly, he gave them all to understand that Jane Reed loved him and again and again by her actions had shown preference for himself. Then down the aisle he passed, while the crowd looked at him in pity, and Job felt as if he must rise and tell of the night at Glacier Point, must vindicate the memory of Jane Reed. But no! God knew all. Some things are too sacred to tell to any ear but his. He must suffer and be still.

When Job went back to his lonely cell that night a boy was whistling on the street, "I'll go with Him all the way," and Job Malden took up the words and said them with a meaning he had never known before.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"CALVARY."

ON THE fourth day the court called for the defense. Curiosity reached its culmination. Men fought for a chance to get within hearing distance. Dan and his comrades sat with an indolent air of satisfaction. Aunty Perkins crowded

close to the front. Through the door and up to the very railing which enclosed the active participants, Andrew Malden and Tony made their way. There were only four possible points for the defense. First, it might prove Job's changed character; second, that it was Job, not Dan, to whom Jane Reed was betrothed; third, that Job was far away in the Merced Cañon with Indian Bill at the time of the death; fourth, to show by what cause death came to the fated girl.

The last, the defense could not prove; for the third, they had no evidence but the prisoner's own word, and that the court would not accept; the second, not even the lawyer or Andrew Malden knew, and no power on earth could make Job Malden tell it; there was no defense to make except to show the character of Job and plead the fact that circumstantial evidence was not proof of guilt.

He did his best, that bungling young attorney. He tried to take advantage of technicalities, but Job utterly forbade that. If righteousness and God could not clear him, nothing else could. The defense was lame, but it proved that some people believed in Job and loved him. Tim's father told, between his tears, the story of "Tim's praist." Aunty Perkins and the preacher spoke ringing words for him. From the Yellow Jacket men came and defended his noble life. But it all went for naught with that jury. It was facts, not sentiment, they wanted. All this might be true, but if Job Malden had done the awful deed which the evidence went to show, then these things only made his crime the blacker.

The defense finished at noon, and the lawyers began their pleas at one o'clock. They hardly needed to speak — Grizzly county had tried the case and the verdict was in. Yet they spoke. How eloquently the prosecuting attorney showed the influence of heredity — that the evil in the father would show itself some day in the boy! How he pictured the temporary religious change in Job's life, and then his relapse as the old fever came back into his blood! He had relapsed before, they all knew. He did not doubt his temporary goodness; but love is stronger than fear and hatred than integrity, and meeting Jane in the valley had roused all the old passion. Out on the cliff they had walked, they had quarreled, all the old fire of his father had come back — perhaps the boy was not to blame — and, standing there alone with the girl who would not promise to be his wife, in his rage he had struck her, and over the cliff she had gone, down, down, on the cruel rocks, to her death, and he had fled over the mountains till, goaded by conscience, haunted by awful guilt, he had come home and given himself up.

The crowd shuddered as he spoke. Tom Reed fainted, Andrew Malden grew deathly white and raised his wan hand in protest, but still the speaker kept on. Job listened as if it were of another he spoke. He could see it all — how awful it was! — and it was Jane and he had done it! He almost believed he had; that man who stood there, carrying the whole throng with him, made it so clear. The voice ceased. Then Job roused himself. The consciousness that it was all false, terribly false, came over him, and he leaned hard on God.

The attorney for the defense said but a word. For a moment it thrilled the multitude. It was a strange speech. This is what he said: "Your honor and gentlemen of the jury, the only defense I have is the character of the young man. I can say nothing more than you have heard to show how far beneath him is such a crime as this. I know you doubt his word, I know you are against him; but, before these people who know me as an infidel — before God who looks down and knows the hearts of men — I want to say that I believe in Job Malden. What I have seen of him in these awful days has changed my whole life. Henceforth I believe in God."

It was over. The judge was charging the jury, "Bring in a verdict consistent with

the facts, gentlemen; the facts, not sentiment." The sun was setting. The jury retired for the night; they would bring in a verdict in the morning.

But the verdict was in. Even Andrew Malden groaned as he leaned on Tony's arm, "Oh, Tony! Tony! How could he have done it!" As Job turned to go back to his cell, he looked over that great crowd for one face that trusted him, but on each seemed written, "Guilty!" He felt as if the whole world had turned from him and the years had gone for naught. There was no voice to whisper a loving word. "Forsaken! forsaken!" He said it over and over. His head was hot, his pulse was feverish. He longed for the touch of his mother's hand; he was hungry for the sound of Jane's voice; he longed to lay his head on Andrew Malden's knee; but he was alone — Calvary was here. The crucifixion hour had come.

At midnight he awoke. A strong arm seemed to hold him, a voice to say. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned." It was the Christ. There alone on the summit of the mount of the cross, amid the bitterness of the world, pierced to the heart, crucified in soul, Job Malden stood with his Master.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE VERDICT.

IT WAS Friday morning. The last day of the trial had come. The hot sun beat down on hundreds pressing their way towards the old court house, too excited to be weary. Never had Gold City known such a day. The court room was crowded two hours before the judge came to the bench. A profound silence filled the place. When Job entered one could have felt the stillness. All knew the verdict — all dreaded to hear it. Dan Dean shrank down behind the post when the jury filed in. Job sat with a far-away look in his eyes. Men, gazing at him, were reminded of pictures of the old saints.

The preliminaries were over, and the foreman of the jury rose to give the verdict. Men held their breath. Women grew pale and trembled. In a clear voice he said it: "Guilty!" For a moment the hush lasted; then Andrew Malden fainted, Tim's father cried, "My God! My God!" a storm of tears swept over the throng, and Job sat motionless, while a look of great peace came into his face and in his soul he murmured, "It is finished!"

But the judge was speaking. He was denying the motion for a new trial; he was asking if the prisoner had aught to say why sentence should not be pronounced against him, when a voice that startled all rang through the great room:

"White man, hear! Bill talk!"

There he stood — from whence he came no one knew — his old gray blanket wrapped about him, his long black hair falling in a mass over his shoulders, the blue overalls still hanging about his great brown feet. With hand outstretched, he stood for a moment in silence, while judge and jury and throng were at his command.

Then he spoke; brief, to the point, fiery, strong. The crowd was spellbound. He carried bench and jury and all with him. He told of the day in Merced Cañon; of the figure on the distant cliff; of the earthquake and Job's fall; how he had seen what he dared not tell the boy — the cliff give way, a white thing go down, down, out of sight. Told of Job's many hours in his tepee, and of how the boy had brought him to the Great Spirit, who took the hate all out of his heart. On he talked, till Job's every statement was corroborated, till a revulsion of feeling swept over the multitude, till they saw it all vividly: that it was the earthquake — it was God, not man, who had called Jane Reed from this world; that the prisoner was as innocent as the baby yonder prattling in its mother's arms.

Dan slunk out of the door, Tom Reed sat in silent awe, Tim's father was in tears, Tony shouted, "Bress de Lawd!" And only Job said never a word, as the judge, disregarding all precedent, dismissed the case. The great trial of "The State vs. Job Malden" was ended.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN JANUARY AND MAY TIME.

THE leaves on the mountain maples turned early that fall. The touch of bitter frost brought forth their rarest colors. The snowflakes fluttered down before November was past; fluttered down and softly covered the furrows and brown earth with a mantle of white.

So the days of that autumn came to Job Malden. The beauty begotten of pain crept into his face. The mantle of silence and peace hid deep the scars of grief. He never talked of the past — no man ever dared broach it. The children at their play in the twilight stopped and huddled close as they saw a dark form climb the graveyard hill, and wondered who it could be. Yet he did not live apart from the world. Never had Gold City seen more of him; never did children love a playmate so much as he who took them all into his heart. Yet he was not of them — all felt it, all saw it. He was with them, not of them. Up higher in soul he had climbed than the world of Gold City could go. He came down to them often, and unconsciously they poured their sorrows at his feet, and he comforted them; but when he went back into the secret holy place of his soul, no man dared follow.

Up at the old ranch, the gray-haired, feeble owner sat by the fire watching the crackling logs and the flames; sat and thought of the years that were gone. Visions of childhood mingled with visions of heaven; the murmur of voices long silent with the words, as Job read them aloud: "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." Tony still sang at his chores. Hans was still at the barn, Bess still neighed in the stable, Shot still barked at the door. But the old home could never be quite the same to the brave, manly fellow who strode in and out across its threshold.

It was New Year's Eve. Job sat by the old stone fireplace. The household had gone to rest. The clock was ticking away the moments of the dying year. Outside, the world was still and white. With head in his hands, Job waited for the year to end.

He was ten years older than when it had begun. He was still a boy then in heart and years; now he was well on in manhood. Yosemite, Glacier Point, Gethsemane, Calvary, Jane Reed's grave, were in that year. He longed to hear its death-knell. Yet that year — how much it had meant to his soul! The sanctifying influence of sorrow had softened and purified his life. The abiding Christ was with him; he lived, and yet not he — it was Christ living in him.

He knelt and thanked Him for it all — heights of glory, depths of tribulation; thanked Him for whatsoever Infinite Love had given in the days of that dark, dark year now ending. The clock gave a warning tick — it was going; a moment, and it would be gone forever. Into his heart came a great purpose — the purpose to leave the past with the past, and in the new year go out to a new life — a life of love for all the world, of service for all hearts. Over his soul came a great joy.

The clock struck twelve. Somebody down the hill fired a gun, the dogs barked a welcome — the new year had come. The schoolhouse bell was ringing, and to Job it seemed to say:

> "Ring out the old, ring in the new,
> Ring in the Christ that is to be."

The young man rose from his knees. He went and opened the door. The white world flooded with silvery light lay before him. The past was gone. He stood with his face

to the future, to the years unscarred and waiting. Into them he would go to live for others. He closed the doors, brushed back the embers, and crept softly up to his room, singing in a low voice the first song for many months:

"Oh, the good we all may do,
While the days are going by."

All day the drums had been beating. All day the tramp of martial feet had been heard along the Gold City streets. The soldiers from Camp Sheridan had marched in line with the local militia, and a few trembling veterans who knew more of real war than either. "Old Glory" on the court house had been at half-mast, the children had scattered flowers on a few flag-marked graves, while faltering voices of age read the Grand Army Ritual. The public exercises in the town square were over.

The sun had set on Decoration Day when Job rode Bess up once more to the old graveyard where Jane lay. Not often did he come here now — he felt that she was up among the stars; it was only the shroud of clay that lay under the sod — yet on this day when love scatters garlands over its dead, he had come to place a wreath of wild-flowers on her grave.

He thought of that night when he had first visited this spot. How far in the past it seemed! He could never forget it, but he could think of it now in quiet of soul, and feel, "He doeth all things well." Reverently he laid the wreath on the grave, knelt in silent prayer, and tarried a moment with bowed head. Memories sweet and tender, memories sad and bitter, came back to him.

Just then he heard a noise, a foot-fall opposite, and looked up to see a tall form supported by a crutch standing with bowed head.

"Why, Dan!" Job said, startled for a moment.

"Job!" answered a trembling voice.

And there they stood, those two men whose lives met in the one under the sod; stood and looked in silence.

At last Dan spoke. But how different his voice sounded! All the scornfulness had gone out of it.

"Job," he said, "Job, I knew you were here. Many a night I have seen you come, have watched you kneeling here, and hated you for it — yet loved you for it. I knew you would come again to-night. I came to stand beneath that old pine yonder, and watched you lay the wreath on the grave. I could stand it no longer. I have come, Job — I have come —" and Dan, yes, Dan Dean, faltered! — "come to be forgiven. For years I have dogged your footsteps, hated you, persecuted you, lain in wait to ruin you. For this alone I have lived. God only knows — you don't — how bad I have been. But, Job, you are too much for me. The more I harm you, the nobler you grow. I have hated religion, but to-night I would give all I ever hope to own to have a little like yours. If religion can do for a fellow what it has for you, there is nothing in the world like it."

A little nearer he came, as Job, hardly believing his ears, listened.

"Job," he cried, "I don't deserve it, God knows! I have wronged you beyond all hope of mercy. But I must be forgiven, or I must die. You must forgive me. I cannot live another day with this awful feeling in my heart. I cannot sleep — I cannot work. I don't care whether I die or not, but I cannot go into eternity without knowing that you forgive me!"

At last the tears came, and Dan sank, crutch in hand, beside Jane's grave.

Job could not speak. For a moment, only the sound of a strong man's sobs and the hoot of an owl filled the air, then a passionate cry burst from Dan's lips:

"Tell me, Job, tell me, is it possible for you to forgive?"

For a moment Job faltered. He could see Trapper Bill pace the tepee and say, "Bill forgive Mono Indian;" he could hear the

Master saying, "After this manner pray ye, Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;" and, kneeling and putting his arm about the quivering form, he whispered:

"Dan, I forgive!"

Long hours they stayed there, praying and talking, till Dan, grown quiet as a child, looked up with a strange, new expression, and said:

"You forgive and God forgives! Oh, Job, this is more than I ever hoped for! I can hardly stand it!"

It was Children's Day when Daniel Dean was received into the Gold City church. No one knew what was coming. Job rode down from the ranch with the secret hid in his heart. It was a lovely June Sunday. The roses were blossoming over the cottages, and the birds sang as if wild with joy. The mountains were covered with green, the valleys were robed in flowers, and golden plains stretched below.

Old friends were greeting each other, and familiar forms passing in at the church door, as Job led Andy Malden, leaning on his cane, to the family pew. The church was a bower of flowers, the songs of birds rang out from gayly bedecked cages, and the patter of children's feet was heard in the aisle.

It was a beautiful service. Music of voice and organ filled the air, wee tots tripped up to the platform and down again, saying in frightened voices little "pieces" that made mothers proud and big men listen. The pastor brought forth a number of candles, large and small, wax and common tallow, and put them on the pulpit, where he lit them one by one, showing how one, lit by the flame of the largest, could pass along and light the others; how one life lit by the fire of Jesus' love could light all the hearts around it. And from smallest bright-eyed boy to gray-haired Andrew Malden, all knew what he meant by the transforming power of a transformed life. It was then that song and service had its living illustration.

From Glacier Point, Yosemite.

It was just as the preacher finished his sermon and asked if any had children to be baptized, that Job arose and said there was one present who had come as a little child to Christ, and who wished to come as a little child into the church, and he would present him for baptism if he might.

The preacher gave willing consent, and the wondering congregation waited. Job rose and passed to the rear. Every head was turned. Then he came back, and on his arm, neatly dressed in a plain black suit, came poor, crippled Dan Dean.

The people who saw that scene can never agree on just what happened then. A resurrection from the dead could scarcely have surprised them more. It is said that they rose en masse and stood in silence as the pair passed down the aisle. Then someone started up, "There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea," and the whole church rang.

Some say that Dan told of his conversion and his faith in Jesus; some, that Job told it; some, the preacher. The preacher's tears, it is said, mingled with the baptismal waters, and the noonday sun kissed them into gold, on that famous Sunday when Daniel Dean was baptized and received as a little child into the Gold City church.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SUNSET.

ONE evening soon after that memorable Sunday, Job reached home rather late. Putting Bess in the stall, he said a tender good-night, crossed the square to the gate, and went up to the house to find it strangely still. He pushed the door ajar and saw the old man leaning on his cane in his arm-chair. His white locks were gilded by the setting sun. His spectacles lay across the open Bible on the chair at his side. Job spoke, but there was no answer. Stepping over to see if the old man was asleep, he found he was indeed sleeping — the sleep that knows no waking.

Just at sunset, as the long summer day was dying, reading that precious Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," the weary traveler on life's long journey had finished his course and gone to the rest that remaineth for the children of God. Beside him, he had laid the Book; he would need it no more — he had gone to see the Savior "face to face." He had taken off his spectacles — the eyes that had needed them here would not need them in that world to which he had gone. On his staff he leaned, in the old farmhouse, the home of many years, and gently as a little child falls asleep in its mother's arms, he had leaned on God and gone to the better Home.

A feeling of utter loneliness came over Job. The last strong tie was broken. That night he walked over the old place in the dim light, and felt that heaven was coming to be more like home than earth.

"Waal, the old man's gone," Marshall Dean said, as he drew his chair back from the table. "Mighty long wait we've had, Sally, but now we'll get ready to move."

"Move!" cried his wife, "move! Marshall Dean, where is your common sense? Don't you know the whole thing will go to that man that's no kith nor kin of his, while we poor relations has to sit and starve!"

"Mother," said a voice, "I think Job Malden has a better right to the place than we. He's been a better relation to the old man than all the Deans together, if I do say it." It was Dan who spoke.

"Yes, that's the way! Bring up a son, and hear him talk back to his mother! — that's the way it goes! Ever since ye got religion down there at that gal's grave, ye've been a regular crank!"

The hot words stung, but Dan remained silent.

"I don't care, ma," said little Tom, "I think Job's nice, and if he's boss I'm going up there every day."

"Yes, and he'll kick ye out, or do the way he did with Dan at the Yellow Jacket — set a parcel of soldiers on to ye, just as if ye was a dog!" sharply retorted Mrs. Dean.

Dan could keep silent no longer. "Mother, what right have you to talk that way? I deserved all I got at the Yellow Jacket. And I shall never forget that when my leg was hurt and the surgeon took it off, Job came in and nursed me. No better man ever walked the earth than Job Malden.

and not one of the Dean family is worth mentioning in the same breath."

The mother cut her bread in frowning silence, the father took his hat and left the room, while little Ross said:

"Job brought me a lot of the prettiest flowers once when I was sick! I wish he owned all the flowers, he's so good to me!"

Just then Baby Jim climbed into his mother's lap and said, "What's 'dead,' mamma? Where's Uncle Andy gone? Is you goin' there?" And the peevish, selfish woman took the child in her arms and went out on the sunny porch, wondering if indeed she was ever going there; whether this something which, after all, she knew had so changed Dan for the better, was for her.

Down at Squire Perkins' that night, a Chinese woman, kneeling by her kitchen chair, prayed that riches might not conquer Job Malden, who by the grace of God had stood so many of life's tests.

On the streets of Gold City they debated over the estate, wondering if Andrew Malden had left anything for public charity, and whether the new lord of Pine Tree Mountain would rebuild the mill and open the Cove Mine. Pioneers of the hills met each other by the way and talked of how fast changes were coming in Grizzly county — Yankee Sam gone, Father Reynolds gone, and now Andy Malden. They shook their heads and wondered what would become of things, with none but the youngsters left.

Up at the ranch, Tony crept softly across the floor and, himself unseen, looked in where Job sat by the still form of "old Marse."

It was over at last. Under the pines, close by his own boy and Jane, they laid him. It was a strange funeral. Tony, Hans, Tim's father and Sing bore the casket. A great throng was there. The man whom Grizzly county had once hated was buried amid its tears. Job stood with bared head as the preacher said, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," and turned quickly away, feeling that the old days were gone forever.

It seemed very strange that night to hear Tony say, "Marse Malden, what's de work yo' hab for me?" He walked through the old house and then went out again. The soul of the place was gone.

Job wondered what the outside world looked like; what God had in store for him. He longed to leave the dead past behind him, and be out in the world of action and mighty purpose. But he was in the memory-world still; and as he slept that night, there came the friends of other days — his blue-eyed mother, Yankee Sam, black-eyed Jane, wan-faced Tim, the old man; across his dreams they came and went.

Last of all One came, the seamless robe enfolding Him, the dust covering His scarred feet, the print of thorns on His brow, and He whispered:

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

CHAPTER XXX.

"AUF WIEDERSEHEN."

IT WAS two days after the funeral. Sing had set things to rights in the old parlor; Tony brought in a bunch of flowers; and Job, leaving Bess saddled by the fence, came in and went up to his little room. They were coming to hear the will read. They would be here soon, the lawyer and the relatives and the preacher — for it was announced that the old man had left a snug sum to the church. Sing and Tony and Hans, arrayed in their best, waited for those who were coming.

At last they came — the preacher on horseback, in his long coat; Marshall Dean and his wife, in their best attire, followed by the nine young Deans of all ages. And back of all was Dan, in his neat black suit, looking paler and more frail than ever. Into the prim little parlor they all filed, and

sat down awkwardly in a line around the room. The preacher remarked upon the weather, Mr. Dean said it was an uncommon warm summer, Mrs. Dean sent Tommy to get her a newspaper to use as a fan.

Just then a horse and cart drove up, and all looked out. It was Aunty Perkins. Why she had come, she knew not, except that Job had sent for her. She trotted in, and, with a little curtsey, said, "How do? Hot in sun. All well?" Next came Tim's father, in a new brown suit and a red tie that matched his hair. Last of all, Tom Reed looked in sheepishly, and seated himself outside the door. All sat in embarrassed silence, which grew painful as the moments went on. Where was the lawyer, and where was Job?

Finally they came — the attorney through the gate and up the path at a brisk pace. Then, dressed in a neat black suit, with black tie and black hat in hand, and looking for all the world as he had years before when he came in on the stage, only older grown, Job came down the stairs and, with a kind welcome, seated himself near the door.

The lawyer adjusted his spectacles and broke the seal of the document in his hand. Hans and Sing and Tony stood in the open door, a picturesque group in the afternoon sunlight. The lawyer rose, looked about, and cleared his throat. The anxious spectators leaned over, breathless. It had come at last! Only a second between them and some substantial remembrance from Andrew Malden.

The will was in the usual form, but it was brief. Slowly, almost haltingly, he read, so that the words fell clearly on each ear. This is what they heard:

"In the name of God, Amen. I, Andrew Malden, a native of Massachusetts, a resident of Grizzly county, State of California, being in clear mind and usual health, do hereby make my last will and testament. I hereby bequeath all my property, real and personal, those lands and buildings and appurtenances thereof situated in the county of Grizzly, all bonds and moneys deposited in the Gold City Bank, to Job Teale, who for many years has lived under my roof and been a son to me. All things that by the grace of God I own, I bequeath to him and his heirs and assigns forever.

(Signed) "ANDREW MALDEN."

A stillness almost oppressive filled the room as the last word fell from the lawyer's lips, as the name of the last witness was read.

It was what they had expected — what in all justice was right — but not what they had hoped. All together they rose to go. The preacher was saying, "Mr. Malden, we hope the Lord will bless these riches to your good," Dan was looking as if impressed with the extreme justice of things, when Job arose and motioned them into silence. There he stood in the center, stood and looked into each face.

"Wait, Mr. Lawyer," he said. "I have a word before you go. Neighbors, friends, I have something to say. Fifteen years ago, the man whose last will we have heard today carried me, a helpless orphan, across the threshold of yonder door. From that night until now, I have called this home. Fifteen years! What changes they have brought! Dan and I were little boys; now we are men. The joys and sorrows of human life have come to me in these years. This old home has been dear to me; I love every nook and corner of it. These well-worn boards are holy ground. Here Andrew Malden lived; by that lounge he became a changed man; from that old rocker he went home to God. By yonder gate I first met her whom you all knew and loved; to this home, torn and crushed by life's troubles, I have fled like a child at dusk to its mother's arms, and in these rooms God has comforted and strengthened my heart. I love you all. Not always have we seen alike; you have not always loved me; but, some day, we shall know as we are known; some day we shall see face to face.

"I love these old mountains. I came to

them a boy; they have made a man of me. I have roamed their forests and climbed their cliffs. Every spot has precious memories. Yes, neighbors, I love the old hills, I love the old home; but to-night I am going far away from them. To-night, before the sun sets, I shall leave the old scenes forever. Here, lawyer, are some papers. Read them when I am gone. This is my will.

"Parson, you will build a new church with the money, and somewhere in it remember the ones who are gone. Tony, Hans, Reed, there is something for all of you. Dan, the old place is yours; keep it till I come. All I shall take is Bess and my mother's Testament.

"Farewell, Dan. Farewell, neighbors. God bless you, Tony; and, when you pray, don't forget me;" and, striding across the room, Job Malden was gone.

By the gate he tarried a moment, put his arms round Shot's shaggy neck and kissed him, sprang on Bess' back, gave one last look at Pine Tree Ranch, and was off.

There, in a silent, awed group, they stood in the door-yard and watched him go through the pasture gate. Across the hills, the sunset and the twilight fell on forest and fields and hearts.

That night, men say, a dark shadow stole out of the graveyard at midnight and galloped away. Far below in the Coyote Valley, where the road to the plains goes down from the hill, some one said that — lying awake near the window, in the stillness which comes towards morning — he heard the sound of horse's hoofs going by, and rider and horse swept on far down the road.

EPILOGUE.

ON PINE TREE MOUNTAIN the old house still stands, its windows hidden beneath vines. Back and forth by the barns Tony slowly moves. By the gate an old dog lies waiting. On the porch a frail cripple sits in the twilight and looks down the road. But the one they wait for will never come. Across the years of busy action and world-wide service he treads the path that leads to "palms of victory, crowns of glory." In the joy of service he is finding the peace which the world cannot give nor take away. In self-forgetfulness he is growing daily into His likeness, until he shall at last awake in His image, satisfied.

THE TAKING IN OF MARTHA MATILDA.

BY BELLE KELLOGG TOWNE.

SHE stood at the end of the high bridge and looked over it to where her father was making his way along the river-bank by a path leading to the smelter. Then she glanced up another path branching at her feet from the road crossing the bridge and which climbed the mountain until it reached a little adobe cottage, then stopped. She seemed undecided, but the sweet tones of a church bell striking quickly on the clear April air caused her to turn her face in the direction from whence the sound came.

It was Martha Matilda, "Graham's girl," who stood thus, with the wind from the snow-caps blowing down fresh upon her, tossing to and fro the slim feather in her worn hat, and making its way under the lapels of her unbuttoned jacket — Martha Matilda Graham, aged ten, with a wistful face that might have been sweet and dimpled had not care and loneliness robbed it of its rightful possessions. Further back there had been a mother who called the child "Mattie." But now there was only "father," and with him it was straight "Martha Matilda," spoken a little brusquely, but never unkindly. Oh, yes, up in the cottage, certain days, was Jerusha, who did the heavy work and then went home nights; with Jerusha it was plain "Mat." Then there was Miss Mary down at the school which Martha Matilda had attended at the time when loving mother-fingers "fixed her up like other girls," and Miss Mary, when speaking to the child "running wild upon the mountain side," always said "dear." But Martha Matilda had dropped out of the day-school and out of the Sunday-school. Somehow she had grown tired of trying to keep shoe-strings from breaking, and aprons from being torn, and if she was just home with Towser, such things did not matter; as to her going to school, her father did not seem to care. "Guess there's no hurry 'bout filling so small a head," he would sometimes say when Jerusha pleaded for school with Martha's eyes assenting.

So now, Martha Matilda stood listening to the chiming of the Easter bells and seemed undecided as to her next move.

"I know Miss Mary's lily is there, and it's got five blossoms on this year; she told father so down at the store. And such a lot of evergreen as the girls did take in yesterday!" Her face was still turned in the direction of the church on the outskirts of the scraggly mountain town, and whose spire pricked through the dark green piñons surrounding it. "I ain't fixed — I ain't never fixed now." And she glanced down along her unbuttoned jacket, over the faded delaine dress, to her shoes tied with strings held together by countless knots. "It seems awful lonesome to be home on Easter."

She pulled out some brown woolen gloves from the pocket of her jacket, and drew them on slowly. Her fingers crowded out through numerous holes, but she pushed them back, pulling the ends of the gloves further up, and drawing down the sleeves of the jacket in an attempt to leave as small a part of the woolen gloves in sight as possible. "Father wouldn't care — he never cares." She buttoned her jacket hastily, settled her brown hat a little straighter, ran fleetly along the road leading toward the church, and breathlessly climbed the rude

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steps, together with a half-dozen other girls, just as the bell threw down its last sweet tone.

Some of the girls going up the church steps nodded good-humoredly to Martha Matilda, but others pushed by too eager to notice. Martha did not follow the girls far up the aisle of the church, but dropped down into an empty pew near the door. How spicy and nice it did smell! She reached up so that she might see the prettily-decorated altar over the heads of the ones filling the church. Yes, there was Miss Mary's lily with its five blossoms right on the stand by the pulpit. How beautiful it looked, showing above the evergreens covering the altar-rail! And there were Mrs. James' geraniums, a whole row of them — no one but Mrs. James ever had geraniums worth much. And there were two little spruce trees, one at each end of the altar-rail, with their cones all on. Hadn't the girls worked, though! But the boys had helped. Lutty Williams had told Martha Matilda all about it Saturday evening, going home from the meat market, and then had awakened the first desire in Martha to go "just for Easter" to the school she had dropped out of.

Martha drew a long breath and was just falling back into an easier posture after her extended survey, when a hand touched her shoulder. "I thought, dear, you would want to see the lilies;" and there was Miss Mary, as tall and sweet as a lily herself, with a brown straw hat wreathed with cowslips, and a blue serge dress, neat and close-fitting. "You can see better up with us;" and she drew the hand with the brown woolen glove up close under her arm.

"Oh, no, Miss Mary, I can't! I ain't fixed! I can see here." And the little girl pulled herself back as far as Miss Mary's hold upon her allowed.

"Nonsense! The idea of your staying down here alone!"

There was such sweet insistence in Miss Mary's voice that Martha stood on her feet and allowed herself to be drawn out into the aisle. But though for a few steps she followed with evident reluctance, a latent dignity caused her to free her hand and walk the remainder of the way as though of her own accord. A cluster of girls were watching for Miss Mary's coming in a square pew near the front.

"We've saved a place for you right here in the middle," said the girl nearest the aisle, as their teacher came to them. And then they shifted this way and that, so that "the place" was widened to take in Martha Matilda as well.

"Doesn't the church look nice, now we have it all fixed!" asked one of the girls, as she nestled up close to Martha, reaching over her to speak lovingly to the teacher.

How cozy Martha felt, sitting there right in the heart of it all! How pretty the lilies were, up near! And to think that her mamma had given the first little bulb to Miss Mary! — Miss Mary had told her so one day at school.

But as Martha was reveling in the sights over which her eyes roamed, and feeling the sweet comfort of being nestled close, a girl at the further end of the pew broke a sturdy bit of rose geranium she held into two pieces and, reaching over, laid one half on the brown woolen gloves.

Looking up, Martha met a smile and a nod from the giver. Thus prompted, a lesson leaf was next laid upon the geranium branch by a second girl, and a smile from another pair of eyes met Martha's. After a little whispering and nodding between two girls near the aisle, one of their open singing books was laid on the lesson leaf. "That's the opening song; you'll get it after the first verse — you always do," was whispered, and, with a nod, the giver settled back in her place, and the one at her side passed her book along so as to make it serve for two.

Oh, how nice it was! And Martha drew a long breath. Then seeing that the holes in her gloves showed, she tucked them

further under the singing book. This called to mind the broken shoe-strings, and she moved her feet back out of sight. But even unmended gloves and untidy shoes could not mar Martha Matilda's sweet feeling of comfort — poor little Martha Matilda, longing so to be taken in somewhere, but hardly knowing where or how!

As it was Easter morning, the service was given to the children, who had the center of the church reserved for them. The superintendent was seated by the side of the minister, and it was he who gave out the opening song. Martha found that after the first verse she could "catch it" very easily, and this joining in the service made her feel all the more one of them. The prayer that followed was a different prayer from any that Martha had ever listened to, so low and sweet and confiding were the words spoken, like friend talking with friend. The second song Martha joined in at once, it being one she knew, and so forgetful of self did she sing that more than one of the girls nodded to her appreciatively, and even Miss Mary looked down and smiled.

After this, there were songs and recitations by the scholars, some of them Miss Mary's own class, and in these Martha took great pride. Later, the older ones from the primary class graduated into the main room, and after a few words from the superintendent, each was presented with a diploma tied with blue ribbon, and a red Bible. How happy the children looked as they went down, not to their old places, but to seats reserved for them among the main-school scholars!

The services closed by a short sermon to the children from the minister — at least he called it a sermon, but to Martha it seemed just a tender little talk from a big brother who loved his little brothers and sisters so that he could not keep his love from showing, and who loved the dear Jesus more than he loved them. Martha had never been talked to like this. She sat forgetful of everything, even the woolen gloves, and at times the minister turned her way and it seemed as though he looked straight into her heart. Occasionally he touched the lilies at his side, showing how one may grow like a lily, expanding to take in Jesus' love as the lilies do the sunshine.

Martha went home as though treading on air. She held the rather wilted spray of rose geranium, and the lesson leaf, and with them was one of Miss Mary's calla lilies, broken off clear down to the ground — "the loveliest of the whole five," the girls said; and Miss Mary had smiled so lovingly when giving it! And then the minister had come up and, laying his hand on Martha's shoulder, had said, "It seems to me this is the little girl who helped me preach to-day by paying such good attention." Then Miss Mary spoke her name, and the minister said, "You must come again, my dear." Oh, it was all like a beautiful dream, only nicer!

Reaching the little home up where the path terminated, Martha opened the unlocked door and passed in. The sunshine made a warm mat on the floor, and the cat was curled contentedly upon it. Martha took a yellow and red vase down from the clock-shelf and, filling it with water, put her lily and geranium branch into it, and placed it on the table covered by a red table cloth, and partly set for dinner. The effect was not quite as pleasing as she expected, but perhaps the rose geranium would lose its droopy look after a while.

Before taking off her hat, she opened the dampers of the stove, tilted the cover above the chicken simmering in its gravy and pulled the kettle further back, then opened the oven door to find it just right for the potatoes Jerusha had in waiting. All this done, she removed her hat and hung her jacket on a nail. As she did so, she caught a glimpse of herself in the little glass over the bureau. It was not pleasing to her. How grimy her face looked, compared with the other girls'! And their dresses had lace

around the neck, or broad collars, or something.

Martha whirled around and, lifting the hand basin from its hook by the sink, she poured some warm water from the teakettle into it, carried it carefully to the sink, loosened her dress and set about giving her face and neck and hands a thorough scrubbing. This done, she drew a long breath. "Guess that fixes that!" she said. Then she took off the bit of soiled ribbon confining her braids, and taking down a comb from the comb-case near, dipped it into water and drew it carefully through her hair, after which she divided it into six strands and, giving each a little twirl, stood for a moment by the radiating stove. Presto! Six ropy curls danced up and down as their owner moved to and fro across the room, and as the sunshine fell over them their beauty lifted the little girl from out her plain surroundings.

She laughed as, brushing the short hair up around her face, and dampening it before the glass, little ringlets nodded around the forehead, modifying its squareness.

"It's 'most too fixed-up to wear that way every day. But Lutty Williams fusses with a hot iron to get hers so."

Then, a new idea striking her, she opened the bureau drawer and took out a white apron with sleeves and long strings. It was a trifle difficult to get on, and still more so to button, but at last this was done, and the strings made into a very respectable bow at the back. Smoothing it carefully down in front, Martha was disappointed to see that it did not reach nearly so far over the brown delaine dress as she had expected. She took no thought of Jerusha's having let out a tuck in her dress since the apron was last worn.

Martha's gaze now reached to her shoes. She turned to the clock, and, taking out a pair of shoe-strings, sat down by the stove and, removing her shoes, threw the bits of broken strings into the fire and threaded in the new lacings, tying them snugly. Lutty Williams' shoes were black as well as her lacings! — again there was a feeling of disappointment.

But the dinner needed her attention, so she turned to finish setting the table, which Jerusha had arranged in part, before going home. A second time a thought seemed to strike her, and now she reached to the top drawer of the bureau and drew forth a white table-cloth. Carefully she placed the vase on the window-sill, and, taking off the dishes and putting them back in the cupboard, removed the red table-cloth, folded it and placed that, too, in the cupboard. Jerusha did not think much of white table-cloths, but it was Easter, and Easter, the minister had said, should show loving touches throughout the home, just as Jesus left his loving touch through the world.

With great care Martha draped the table with the white linen, and replaced the lily. How beautiful it looked now in its new surroundings! — too beautiful for the hacked white dishes Jerusha used. So a chair was placed in front of the green cupboard, and with precision in every movement the "sprigged" dishes were gotten down.

"Oh, if only it could be that way all the time!" Martha Matilda sighed, standing beside her carefully-arranged table with shining eyes. But the potatoes were brown and puffy, and the hand of the clock reached to just half-past one. She gave a glance around the room, grabbed her hat, and was off; it was time for her to meet her father at the bridge, as she always met him Sundays, when dinner was ready. No matter how much John Graham might enjoy lolling in the sun by the smelter door with "the boys," he never forgot the time when the brown hat was to be met down by the bridge. "A little close," was often said of John Graham. "A trifle sharp in getting the best of a bargain, but to be depended upon every time."

Martha saw her father's faded felt hat bobbing up over the further abutment, and she flew across the bridge. "Oh, I am so

glad to see you!" she said, catching hold of one of his big hands and covering it with both of her small ones, as she danced along beside him.

"One'd 'most think I'd been to Ingy," said the man in what would have seemed a gruff voice to some. Then he glanced at the little figure by his side, and said in just the same every-day tone, out of which he was seldom drawn, "Might'ly fixed up, seems to me."

"It's Easter, you know, pa. I went to Sunday-school. Miss Mary's lily was there, and there was lots of evergreen, and the minister said I helped him preach. And oh, pa, you don't know how the girls did take me in! They sat up just as close!"

"Take you in! And why shouldn't they?"

"But you know, pa, they fix up so. And — " The little girl stopped, seeming to feel it somewhat difficult to make her father understand the situation.

"So it's fine feathers, is it?" And now there was a decided gruffness in his voice.

But they had reached the door of the cottage, and the cat jumped down from the chair and brushed against the legs of her master. There was tea to be made, and the chicken to be dished; but the father did the latter, after having washed carefully. The potatoes were given the place of honor and the two sat down to do the meal justice.

"We might have had some eggs, seeing it's Easter," said the man, passing one of the largest potatoes to the little girl.

"Lutty Williams' mother colored hers. Lutty said I might have one of them, if I'd come over for it."

"Guess I wouldn't go to Lutty Williams' for no eggs, if I was in your place!" said the father.

This somewhat dampened the little girl's ardor, and the rest of the meal was partaken of in silence.

The dishes were cleared away and the red table-cloth replaced. "No use in Jerusha's being bothered," the wise Martha reasoned, as she replaced the white linen in the drawer. Then she unbuttoned the big gingham apron she had put on over the white one, and felt inclined to send the white apron after the table-cloth. But something kept her from doing this. "It's Easter anyhow."

Her father had taken the cat on his lap, and in a chair tipped back against the wall, with a broom splint between his teeth, sat reading the county paper.

Martha stood on the doorstep looking off to the mountains, and there was the old wistful look on her face again. The April sun had clouded in, and so had the bright spirit of the child. She tried to draw to her the warmth that had been holding her close, but instead there rested upon her a dreary sense of loneliness. Jerusha wouldn't wash white aprons every day, even if she fussed to put them on. In the morning her father would be off to the smelter. The same old life waited for her. She stood for a long time there in the door. Then her father reached around and took hold of her.

"What's the matter?" He had heard a sob. And though the little girl drew back he pulled her to him. "You ain't cryin'? Hoity-toity! A white apron, and hair all fixed, and the girls taking her right in, and — crying!"

"But, pa, I can't make it stay. Jerusha won't wash white aprons, and there ain't enough, anyway — and — it's so lonesome here with just Jerusha! All the rest of the girls have some one standing close — as close as that to them." And the little girl clutched at her father's coat-sleeve to demonstrate the closeness of relationship, while the sobs came thick and fast.

"Nobody but Jerusha!" The father brought his chair down from the wall, and all the blood in his body seemed to rush to his face. "Nobody standing close! Where be I standing? What am I going to the smelter for, putting two days into one, if it ain't standing close?"

The man spoke impetuously, the words tumbling recklessly one over the other, and the little girl's sobs were tumbling in th

same way; neither seemed inclined to stop the other.

"What'd I stand in front of Simonses show-window last night for, looking at them posies they've got for Easter, if 'twasn't because I'd liked to have brought the hull lot home? And why didn't I bring 'em home? Just so as I could slip more money this month in under the little bank winder. And what am I slippin' money into the bank for? Why'd I buy them Jersey cows, and that bit o' mountain park, if 'twasn't because I knowed Jerusha was the best butter-maker in town, and butter meant money, and money meant an easy time for you by and by? Standin' close!"

The man's voice broke. The little girl had ceased crying and was standing with wide, strained eyes fastened on her father. What did it all mean?

But the father did not say what it meant. As one suddenly overtaken, he pushed the cat from off his lap, rose, drew a long breath, and reached for his hat.

Had Martha Matilda been older, she would have tried to detain the one she had wounded. For he was wounded, just as are we all when suddenly there comes to us knowledge of long-continued effort being unappreciated. What was the use of all this struggling, beginning with the day and closing only when it was ended! He pulled an oat straw from a stack near, and then leaned on the bars of the cow-yard. Far beyond him were the snow-caps, now pink with the setting sun — the glow which the one gone from him had so loved to catch. His throat ached with suppressed emotion. He had striven so to stand true, to make the life of the child she had left easier than hers had been, just as he had promised!

The cows crowded up restlessly against the bars. It was milking time. Mechanically he returned to the kitchen, brought back with him the pails, placed a stool and sent the tinkling streams against the shiny pail. Pail after pail was filled and set aside, then with a gentle pat for the last meek-eyed Jersey, he brought the milk back to the house, strained it carefully, filled a saucer for the cat at his feet, rinsed the pails, and after the cows had been cared for for the night, went back and hung his hat on its accustomed nail. He crossed to the window where Martha sat stiff and uncomfortable in the big rocking-chair. Sitting down in front of her, he tilted his chair forward and, lifting her hands, stroked them gently.

"I have been thinking it all out down by the cows. It ain't right." He did not look at the face of the little girl, only at the hands he was stroking. "It wasn't because I wanted to break my promise to your ma — it wasn't a bit of that. You see the road was too hard for your ma; it is always go down or go up here in the mountains, and then it was always a little more money needed than we had. And when you came she couldn't bear to have the strain touch you, and almost the last thing she said was, 'You'll make it easier for her, she's such a little tot.' It wasn't because I meant to wriggle out of my promise that made me pretend not to see when your shoes gave out and your dresses got old and things in the house didn't run straight; it wasn't that."

There was a great sob in the voice now, and Martha, hearing it, looked up to find her father's rugged face wet with tears.

"Oh, pa, don't!" and the child's arm reached around her father's neck and she put her face close against his cheek.

But the man shook himself partially free, as he brushed the tears from his face.

"And you think as how there ain't been any love in it, when it's been all love! You see, the trouble's here: In trying to make an easier road for you than your mother had, I looked all the time at the further end instead of the nigh end. And I was so afraid that when you got further on there'd be no backing for you, that I left you without a backing now. But we will start right over new. I haven't just kept my promise, 'cause your mother meant it to be at this

end and right straight on. And that's how it should be. We'll start over new. It ain't ever too late to stop robbing Peter to pay Paul. You go straight down to Simonses to-morrow morning, Martha Matilda."

The little girl was looking at him now with cheeks flushed with eager attention. She go down to Simonses! But her father's words held her again.

"And you buy just as many of them posies as you want, and you get enough to make a bunch for every one of them girls as took you in, and you take 'em to them, and tell them that's your Easter gift."

"But pa—"

"There ain't no 'but pa' about it! And you fix a bigger bunch for Miss Mary, and get a shiny ribbon and tie round it—that's the way your mother fixed posies when she wanted them nice—and you tell Miss Mary that's for her Easter. And then you go to the minister's—"

Martha clapped her hands over her lips to keep back a cry of surprise. She go to the minister's!

"Your mother always went to the minister when anything was wanted. And you tell him John Graham wants that pew that he had when the church was first built—Number 25, on the east side, by the second window—the one that looks out on the mountains. Your mother and I put a sight of work and good hard money into the building of that church, and I ought to have stood right by it all along and not dropped out just because Sunday clothes cost."

"Oh, pa, did you help build that church?"

"Guess there's plenty round as would tell you so, if you asked, though this minister don't know, 'cause he's new."

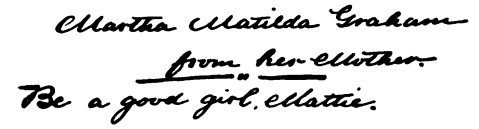
"Say, pa, can't I have a red Bible? Of course it wouldn't be just like getting into Sunday-school regular, like the primaries, but I would like a red Bible."

"There it is again! All wrong. There's your mother's Bible; I hain't meant not to give it to you, only I was a-keepin' it till the further end of the road came when you'd 'preciate it better."

John Graham got up, and taking down a half-filled lamp, lighted it, the little girl keeping close at his side. From that same upper bureau drawer he took out a small package and, undoing the handkerchief wrapped around it, brought to view a Bible with a gilt clasp.

"It ain't a red Bible, but it's a Bible that has been read," he said. "And here's your name, just as your mother wrote it for you, almost the last time she handled it."

He opened the fly-leaf, and little Martha, drawing up close to his arm, read:



"Oh, pa, how I am being taken into things!" said the little girl, the tears toppling over her eyes, and her cheeks bright and rosy.

And then the father took Martha on his lap and talked to her of her mother—of the life she had lived, and of the Bible she read, and of the God she loved; talked to her as he had never talked in all her ten years. When he had ended, she put her arms around his neck and held him close. The clock struck eight and the father arose, lighted the little girl's candle, and she mounted the crooked stairs to the small room above. Setting down the candle, she made herself ready for bed, buttoning on the little white night-dress made of flour-sacks and with blue XX's on the back, but which "looked all right in front," as Jerusha said. This done, she blew out the light and, drawing aside the bit of muslin curtain, gazed out on the clear Colorado night, with the stars glimmering through. A moment she stood thus, then she pressed her hands over her face, and bowing her head said, soft and low:

"Be a good girl, Mattie."

How sweet the words were when voiced!

"I will be a good girl — I will," she murmured, and her voice was tender but strong of purpose. As she laid her head down upon the pillow she whispered, "How I be taken into things!"

And Martha Matilda never knew that down in the big chair the one she had left sat with his hand covering his bronzed face, motionless. The ticking of the clock was the only sound heard. When he arose, the lamp had burned itself out, and the room stood in darkness. But he failed to sense it. Within him had been kindled a light brighter than an Easter dawn. John Graham was ready to take up life anew.